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The Editors
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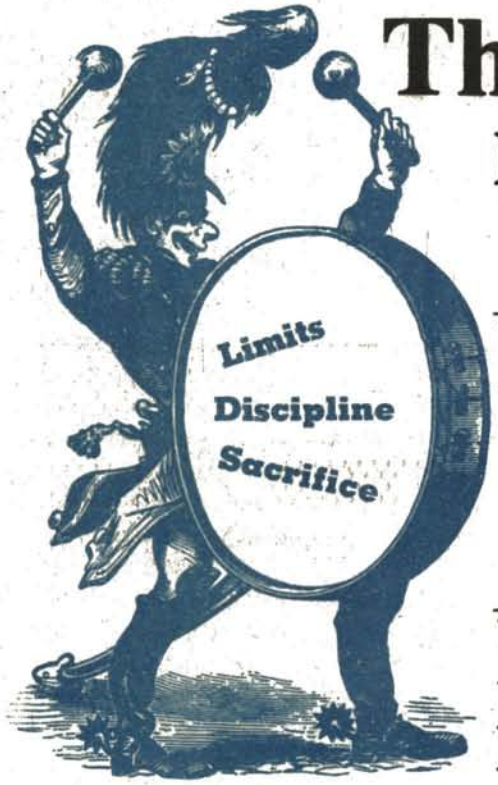
ONE DOLLAR

AUGUST 31, 1979



The new political rhetoric

J. PATRICK DOBEL SEPARATES THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF

Parents, children & the Supreme Court

MAURICE DeG. FORD EXAMINES TWO IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Mythology and motherhood

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FRANK GETLEIN **THE BOMB[illegible] OF GENERAL HAIG**
ABIGAIL McCARTHY **NEW AI[illegible] ICA**
ARTHUR A. COHEN **RICHAR[illegible]**

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Correspondence

Message from McLuhan

Toronto, Canada

To the Editors: John Ahern's review [May 25] of Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* begins by manifesting a complete misunderstanding of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. He cites "McLuhan's inability to love the printed word." *The Gutenberg Galaxy* makes no personal value judgments because it is concerned with *formal* causality and the study of effects, with reception aesthetics. Professor Eisenstein is concerned with *efficient* causality: her title is *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*! This level of descriptive narrative leaves ample room for the noting of *content* and the making of value judgments, both of which are alien to the level of formal causality.

In a utilitarian society, untrained in the study of formal structures and patterns of effect, efficient causality and moralizing is the only acceptable norm. Having written *The Gutenberg Galaxy* by way of turning in a fire alarm, I find it curious that some readers have charged me with arson. With the onset of the instantaneous electronic environment of information, it was reasonable to perceive the danger posed to the book and to literacy. Gutenberg had made everybody a reader; Xerox makes everybody a publisher. These are widely contrasting effects.

MARSHALL McLUHAN

Not by definition alone

Princeton, N.J.

To the Editors: Walter Jeffko's lucid article ["Redefining Death," July 6] is noteworthy for its comprehension of the unity of rational personhood with "animality" or "organicity" in human life (and so also death). Nor should anyone object to the claim that our spiritual nature is higher and primary, our animality lower and secondary. For Jeffko holds these together in integral unity.

By contrast, those who today espouse a further up-dating of the definition of death—neocortical death—are *consciousness*-ridden dualists. This is the besetting sin of the present age; a sin because the separation of spiritual personhood from bodily life is adopted for ulterior purposes. By taking this definitional route, more patients can simply be declared dead. Also by excessive stress on personhood one can win great victories for the new sexual morality.

Still a *definition* has operational use that Jeffko's philosophy obscures. "Death is *the irreversible cessation* primarily *of cerebral function; and* secondarily but necessarily *of* (a) *lower brain function, including that of the brain stem;* (b) *spontaneous respiratory function; and* (c) *spontaneous circulatory function.*"

What is the force of adding "but necessarily" to the word "secondarily" in the foregoing sentence? This could mean that (a) and thereafter (b) and (c) are necessary in addition to cerebral death before the definition is complete and the death of a human organism as a whole can be properly declared.

Or the author could mean to say that *when* there is irreversible cessation primarily of cerebral function there *follows necessarily* the cessation of lower brain function, etc. My understanding is that while (b) and (c) necessarily follow upon (a), the latter (lower brain function) is compatible with cessation of cerebral function, e.g., in the case of Karen Quinlan.

The author's position is clearly the first meaning of "necessarily." He proposes a two-step definition of death: "For a man is not dead until all . . . are fulfilled; and if one of them is not fulfilled—whether primary or secondary—he is still alive." While dying may be a *process*, a person is not dead until he is—well, dead! What then is the practical use of distinguishing between primary and secondary aspects of death? Why compose a *definition* by which a person can be, as it were, half-way dead but still alive?

The author takes the definitional route to reach a very simple conclusion. He believes his two-part definition of death indicates "what kind of life is significant and worth saving. . . . [I]f an individual meets the primary attribute of death but not the secondary ones, he no longer possesses significant human life (although to be sure, he is still alive), and his life is no longer worth prolonging—at least by the use of extraordinary means."

That is an extraordinarily ordinary conclusion to draw from exercising our definitions. There are two reasons for, say, stopping a respirator. The latest reason is because the patient is *dead* and we shouldn't pump a corpse. The century-old reason is because it is useless to continue, of no benefit to the patient (*although to be sure, he is still alive*, and provided he is "secondarily and necesssarily" *dying*). I see no gain from Professor Jeffko's effort to subsume the latter reason for stopping treatment into the first aspect of a *definition* of *death*.

Minor—maybe major—objections can be raised against the confused evaluative language in the quotation above. No Christian should believe that a person still surely alive no longer possesses significance, that he is not worth saving. Here *obligation*-language should be used, not the language of worth or value. The issue is simply our finite duty to the dying whom we cannot save but whose significance none of us can assess.

Let no reader suppose, however, that nothing more radical or preposterous is going on in up-to-the-minute discussions of cerebral or neocortical death by leading "bioethicists." The upshot will be that soon priests will not be giving "last rites" (the sacrament for the *sick*) to persons whose hearts still beat spontaneously. Instead they will be celebrating

(Continued on page 478)

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AFTER ANDREW YOUNG

THE RESIGNATION of Andrew Young as Ambassador to the United Nations promises to leave lasting wounds on America's domestic and international politics. This damage can be limited only if we clearly assess what was involved in the Young affair—including its bitter aftermath of increased tension between American blacks and Jews.

Some have insisted, some have conceded, but in the end almost everyone, Andrew Young included, agreed that the attractive and outspoken Ambassador had to go. An official representative of any nation cannot conduct an independent foreign policy—and, worse, misrepresent to the public and his superiors the fact that he is doing so. Of course, it may be the case that Young's initiatives with the PLO weren't really so independent after all. Foreign offices do pursue policies in private that they reject in public, and those who know the full complexity and ironies of peacemaking are not apt to condemn such dissimulation in every case. In the case of embarrassing revelations, such tactics demand a "fall guy," however, and if this was the game Young was playing, he knew the possible price ahead of time.

Nor was the matter, as some people have mistakenly said, a mere question of protocol. Whether wisely or not, the United States made a pledge to Israel "not to recognize or negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization" until the PLO recognized Israel's right to exist; the pledge was made as part of the agreement leading to Israel's 1975 withdrawal from a section of the Sinai. If peace is ever to emerge in the Middle East, it will be built on pledges like that one, and to treat them lightly, or as subject to unilateral revision, is to throw away one's shoes at the beginning of a long journey.

That was why Andrew Young had to resign—not because he was black, not because he angered some American Jews, not even because he advocated a "softer" line toward the PLO; but because the accountability of diplomats and a respect for agreements are at the heart of any healthy foreign policy.

This does not, however, settle the debate about American policy toward the Palestinians. As a private citizen Mr. Young can make a good case for the policy that, pursued as U.S. Ambassador, rightly cost him his job. The facts are that the United States has had a good number of contacts with the PLO, that Israel knows this, that the U.S. know that Israel knows, and that everyone involved recognizes the advantage of at least some lines of communication with the PLO which, in the nature of things, will amount to a species of "negotiating." It is even plausible that such contacts, depending on their substance and the discretion with which they are carried out, involve high American officials, though it would be folly, as in this case, not to let the Israelis know of this interpretation of our pledge. The heart of the matter is the denial of recognition for the PLO in the absence of its refusal to recognize Israel. The nearly intractable conflicts of the Mideast will not be resolved

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except by moderates on all sides, and to drift into either informal or formal recognition of the PLO at this time would sign the death warrant for moderation, both among Palestinians and Israelis.

At a different moment, the Young initiative might well have passed as the sort of flexibility, far short of recognition, that our pledge to Israel might encompass. Unfortunately, this moment is characterized by intense distrust between Israel and Washington. The Begin government has put forward a proposal for West Bank autonomy that, in the words of the London *Economist*, concedes "rather less than the powers of a British borough council" and "still resists anything that anybody else would call self-rule for the Palestinians." On its part, the U.S. has made several hasty gestures—the amendment of Resolution 242, for example—that not even President Sadat, let alone the Israeli government, approves. The fact that these initiatives have a plausible link to Saudi Arabia's increased outflow of oil make the Israelis very worried—and correspondingly intransigent. If, as reported, they played the key hand in exposing Mr. Young's secret dealings, then it surely shows their mood of imprudent desperation. The only winner in the Young affair will be the PLO itself, which has suddenly passed from an organization most Americans associate only with cruel attacks on noncombatants to one that a number of outstanding Americans want to talk to.

This brings us to another tragic aspect of Mr. Young's resignation: the rift it has apparently widened between blacks and Jews in America. This is not some passing matter of a potential disruption in the coalition of ethnic groups that is crucial to the Democratic party and Mr. Carter's future. It is a fragmentation of moral symbolism that can only wreak havoc on our national life. Both the Jews and the blacks represent compelling moral claims in their respective histories of oppression—claims both against and for the civilization that produced black slavery, the Holocaust *and* the ideal of equal justice under law. Over the years most leaders in both the Jewish and black communities have seen their moral claims as parallel if not identical. That they should be seen as set against one another, even (or especially) in some vague, general sense, will be terribly destructive.

The problem is complicated. Jewish organizations and Jewish leaders have felt compelled to take a strongly negative position on affirmative action programs. And as Rabbi Balfour Brickner recently wrote, there seems to have been a distinct turn inward among Jews, a withdrawal from social activism in the larger community—no more so, it should be added, than has marked the nation at large but perhaps more noticeable in the case of the traditionally most liberal and most socially active group in American society. All this probably has more to do with black recriminations than Middle Eastern politics.

On the other hand, black leaders have voiced a number of disconcerting themes. To express a concern for Palestinian human rights is beyond reproach: the problem in the Mideast has always been *how* to assure Palestinian rights without endangering those of Israelis. To advance PLO's claims on the grounds of assuring heating fuel for America's black poor is another matter, however. The connection is spurious, in the first place. OPEC's policy derives from the Gospel according to Adam Smith and not from the PLO; OPEC would make the most of its oil resources even if the Israeli-Palestinian dispute disappeared tomorrow; and OPEC will not concede more to the American poor than it has done to the Indian or Brazilian poor. But this particular form of "linkage" is also dangerous. If our foreign policy is going to be auctioned off for oil, then moral claims go by the board, including those of the poor. In the game of self-interest, the vacationing middle class and the oil companies are sure to be out front, not those trapped in freezing tenements.

What next? First, President Carter should do more than express his sorrow at Andrew Young's resignation; he should state firmly why it was the inevitable outcome of an accountable foreign policy. Second, the State Department should clarify its interpretation of our pledge to Israel, insisting on both a degree of contact with the PLO and a refusal to recognize it or enter into substantial negotiation on the issues at the heart of the Mideast conflict. Third, Washington should make absolutely clear both its dissatisfaction with Mr. Begin's autonomy proposal *and* America's unwillingness to barter Israel's security for relief at the gas lines. Fourth, Jewish and black leaders should open a thorough-going dialogue before the immense ground that unites them is fogged over by frustration and recrimination. The stakes could not be higher.

After the Cabinet shake-up

A WORD FOR CARTER

NOT ONE BUT TWO WASHINGTONS

EVEN AFTER his domestic summit at Camp David, his energy sermon and his Cabinet shake-up, Jimmy Carter remains in severe political trouble. He shouldn't be surprised; just describing the nation's malaise and political fragmentation doesn't make them go away.

But looking back at Carter's record in July, it seems that his only real mistake was announcing his Cabinet changes after his dramatic July 15 speech instead of during it.

Despite his dismal approval rating, Carter is stronger than most people suppose. A *Washington Post* poll taken at the end of July found that more than 60 percent of the American people believe Carter is doing as well as or better than most presidents would do in handling energy and the economy.

Perhaps the most serious charge being made against Carter is that he cannot credibly run against Washington—as he is obviously doing—after being president for two-and-a-half years. But that's not as inconsistent as it seems when you realize that there are really two Washingtons.

The first Washington is the place where they send out the Social Security checks, design consumer co-op banks and

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welfare plans and ban the use of amphetamines as diet pills. Carter has not done badly with this Washington, and there are signs he will do even better. The White House seems to have realized the importance of rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies after spending too long doing the reverse.

At the same time, Carter's new Cabinet is in some ways better than his first; it is certainly better organized and disciplined. (Carter's firing of Joe Califano at HEW did not go down well with many liberals; I share Carter's own ambivalence—I think Califano was a great secretary and I think he made his firing inevitable by acting as though he was not accountable to anyone.)

But Carter has not done well with the second Washington, a place where a congressman will vote against a president's bill because he didn't like what he was served at a White House breakfast; where loyalty is a bad word; where a man's voice is more important than what he says; where congressmen whose strings are pulled by their Legislative Assistants pontificate about Hamilton Jordan's power; where everything is measured by what it will do for "me."

One poll taken after the Cabinet shake-up found that Americans believe Carter's Georgian advisers have too narrow a perspective by a 44-42 margin; anyone reading the Washington papers would have expected the margin to be 98-1.

Carter must find a way to run against the second Washington while showing he can master the first. If he fails politically, he will bear a large part of the blame, but so will a city that clamors for leadership, but refuses to be led.

JIM CASTELLI

(Jim Castelli is the Capitol Hill reporter and columnist for NC News Service.)

John Cardinal Wright

SACERDOS ET PONTIFEX

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ESSENTIALS

JOHN JOSEPH WRIGHT, Bishop, Cardinal of the Holy Roman church, who died in Boston on August 10, once told me about a Collect he especially loved, and about his feelings when he first prayed it at Mass in Rome soon after his ordination.

This Collect for the Third Sunday after Pentecost in the old missal (and now, like so many other profound and beautiful things, lost or strangely altered in the new missal) beseeched God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, to multiply his mercy upon us, so that with him for our ruler and guide, we may so pass through the good things of time that we do not lose those things which are eternal. John Wright's love of these words, and his reaction to them on a morning early in his priesthood, tell us much about this brilliant, complex, unforgettable man: intellectual, humanist, raconteur, friend, churchman, lover of the good things of this world *and* the glorious things of the world to come.

I can hear his wonderful voice, recalling the Collect and the Mass: "Think of the meaning of these words, *Sic transeamus per bona temporalia; ut non amittamus aeterna!*" Here, he said, the secret of Christian humanism was revealed to him. He prayed the Collect in an ancient Roman chapel, and as he prayed the sun streamed upon the marble altar where he stood. He felt at once—and all together—the splendor and the wonder and the joy of life: the pathos of its passing and the glory beyond the passing. He wept (as he often did), rejoicing, and went on with what he had to do.

John Wright loved the world. He loved his friends. He loved ideas and conversation, good food and good wine. Above all else, as he confessed, he loved the church—one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and, of course, *Roman*. The church was the sign of those things which are eternal, set down among the good things, and the bad things, that pass. Who wounded (or seemed to wound) the church wounded him. Who made the church weep made him weep.

John Wright was a liberal Catholic in the tradition of French, English and American liberal Catholism, the tradition of Lacordaire, Dupanloup, Blondel and Maritain, Newman and Acton, Orestes Brownson, Archbishop Ireland and *Commonweal* itself. Liberal Catholicism, in its 19th and 20th century versions, existed in a state of tension between the prevailing Catholic ethos and the values of the "modern" world. It sought to reverse the popular Catholic distrust of many liberal values, to gain a wider, deeper acceptance among Catholics for the ideals of democracy, political and cultural pluralism, social and economic justice, intellectual freedom and diversity; it fought, and indeed abhorred, the authoritarian methods and mentalities which continued, until Vatican II at least, to earn the church its reputation as a Monolith. At the same time, liberal Catholicism opposed the dogmatic secularism and moral relativism that characterized much liberal thought. In and through all of this, liberal Catholicism prided itself on its fidelity to *basic* Catholic doctrines, on its love for and loyalty to the church.

In 1952 I wrote an article in *Commonweal* called "The Liberal Catholic." In it I said that we liberal Catholics asked a radical revaluation among many of our fellow Catholics of their basic attitudes (mostly illiberal) towards the modern world. "This revaluation," I wrote, "demands no sacrifice of whatever is essential to the Faith; it implies no surrender to relativism or secularism. Rather, it emphasizes the church's genius for eternal renewal."

How dated this may now sound, a quarter century later. "The essentials of the Faith" are not as clear as they seemed then. Certainly, for most, they are not as many. But to all who, with any intellectual honesty, contine to call themselves Catholic, there were, are, and always will be Essentials. To affirm this proposition, to fight for it when many seem to think that the history of dogma, liturgy, and the church itself began around 1966, is not to have become "conservative." It is to

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have survived, as a liberal Catholic, into an age when that Center which *is* liberal Catholicism is threatened by attacks from right and left.

John Cardinal Wright did not leave the classic liberal Catholic tradition; it left him, or at least it disappeared as he had known it in the years and the angers that followed Vatican II; and he often seemed unable to distinguish between what was substantial and what was foolish and fashionable in its development. To John Wright it seemed (and he grieved because of it) that too many of the "new" liberal Catholics had no tolerance for those who loved ancient things or defended ancient traditions and values. He continued to love and defend them (whether he was right or wrong on any particular issue, theological or disciplinary, is not the question here) and at the same time to reach out to love the world. To the end he was *Sacerdos et Pontifex*, Priest and Bridgebuilder, as we used to sing when a bishop entered a church.

Wright's great hero was John Henry Newman, precisely because Newman combined deep love of and loyalty to the faith with deep love and understanding of the world. For this reason he established an Oratory in his diocese of Pittsburgh in 1961. He established it "in the spirit of Newman" and set it among the city's secular universities with the hope and the prayer that it might be a community where love of the church and love of liberal values—learning, freedom, civility, art—might come together. As much as anything else he did, his foundation of the Oratory defined the man: to so love, and serve, the good things of the world that we do not lose those things which are eternal.

More than anyone I've ever known, John Wright had the virtue of piety, *pietas*, in the Virgilian sense. He was not, as far as I know, an admirer of the 18th century. In fact, he probably hated it for its rationalism. But Alexander Pope's warning in "The Essay on Man," was part of Wright's natural wisdom: "Be not the first by whom the new is tried/Nor yet the last to lay the old aside." His *pietas* made the Cardinal impatient, often furious, with those who had "itching ears." All should be tested and tempered, John Wright thought. One should not easily abandon traditions that have grown from the accumulated experience of history. Like Edmund Burke, he believed that the man who marries the spirit of the age will soon be a widower.

Such views did not always help John Wright's popularity in the post-Vatican II church. But, I think, they kept him wise and made him great. Lord, grant him eternal rest; and let perpetual light shine upon him. Bishop, Cardinal, Friend: Farewell.

WILLIAM CLANCY

(Father William Clancy, who was an editor of Commonweal *in the 1950s, was ordained priest by Cardinal Wright in 1964. Since 1968 he has been Provost of the Oratory, Pittsburgh.)*

Of several minds: *Abigail McCarthy*

THE NEWING OF AMERICA

NEW CITIZENS, NEW SPIRIT

THINGS LOOK rather gloomy. The papers have been full of futurists' reports recently, almost all of them agreed that we will be in a period of upheaval—of "malaise"—until the end of the century. Not a pleasant prospect.

And, columnists and commentators, when they weren't writing about the troubles of the President, were contributing to that malaise by mourning the decline in the American ability to compete with friend and foe. We have lost the capacity to innovate, to take joy in work and thrift, to give plan and direction to our lives. We have lost the edge—so they say.

But, even as we old Americans lose heart, it may be that the seeds of our renewal have been sown by some of those new Americans so often thought of as burdens on our resources and institutions. I don't know if Cynthia, for example, knows of this malaise. If she does, she certainly has little patience with the idea. Cynthia, a trim brown woman in her fifties, is from Guyana. She thinks that we, of the old Americans, do not know the wealth of the possibilities offered to us. She herself is now helping to bring up a second generation of Americans—her grandchildren.

"We are bringing them up the old way," she says. By that she means that they learn to work and to help from the time they are small. When they are considered to have earned the right, they are allowed to buy some of the things they want or need under their parents' supervision. "They learn they don't need everything they see on television. Is the television going to pay for it?" says Cynthia, and adds thoughtfully, "I don't think it hurts them and I think they are happy. My son, my daughter—we brought them up that way—and they are happy. They have what they want—good jobs, their own homes, good chances for their children."

According to Cynthia, Guyanans bring to this country a tradition of helping each other get started—the tradition of "the box," a simple but effective method of savings and loan. As she explains it, twenty-six people may agree to put twenty-five dollars each in "the box" for twenty-six weeks. It is held and safeguarded for them by one of their number. Each week, in the turn assigned to him or her at the time of the agreement, some one draws out $650.00. He is said to have "a hand" in the box—or he may have two hands and two turns if he decides to put in more each week.

The advantage to the newcomer, dependent on an uncertain low-paying or part-time job, is the availability of the lump sum. "You put twenty-five dollars in the bank—does the bank let you take

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out $650.00?" asks Cynthia. Probably not. Certainly not without paying for it. Those who draw out first are borrowing and paying back; those who draw out at the end have accumulated savings.

Guyans have bought homes and made other investments with the help of their start from "the box." (Cynthia has helped to buy three houses—her own, her daughter's and her son's.) The institution of "the box" has spread. Wherever Guyanans work their co-workers are apt to join in. There is an incentive to thrift in the collective effort.

Just as the example of thrift inflects others, so must others be affected by the pleasure people like Cynthia take in work and personal achievement. Cynthia works as a hairdresser's assistant most of the time, but she found time to take a course in practical nursing and now is on call several nights a week. Her patients, for the most part, are terminally ill, and she takes pride in making them comfortable and in comforting them. She learned to drive this year in order to get to her patients, and learned so well that she navigated snow-choked streets with ease when other Washingtonians were hopelessly stuck. It goes without saying that she bought her own car.

The Guyanans are a tiny minority but they are contributing to our well being. Another tiny minority is fast taking the lead in scholastic achievement. An astonishing number of the top-ranking students in university and college graduating classes this year were Vietnamese. They tended to excel, it is interesting to note, in those areas in which we are said to be lagging—in engineering and the technological sciences, in mathematics and in business administration. Their drive to excel may well lead to new starts for all of us.

Other new Americans are affecting the quality of life. Latin Americans tend to give new meaning to family life and to neighborhoods. "It is not just that they help each other," says a black friend of mine who lives across the street from a veritable clan of the Spanish-speaking. "The *enjoy* each other. They're always visiting each other, hugging each other, planning outings. And they do love their children!" The Spanish-speaking learn the resources of the city. They play soccer in the parks, organize and attend free concerts, gradually begin to take their children to exhibitions and museums. They reinfuse a city with vitality, bring our streets to life.

New Americans are bringing about constructive changes in top economic levels as well. A Japanese-American from California made news recently by the way he has helped several big corporations bring about increases in their production—by teaching them to increase participation in decisions at every level in the Japanese way. "The Japanese have little use for individual responsibility, the 'buck-stops-here' philosophy," explains observer Rochelle Jones. "They are a society of groups and within the groups lies shared responsibility for decisions." In such shared responsibility American workers, alienated of late, are regaining a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging, and are at last receptive to the gift Japanese-Americans brought us generations ago. Things are not all gloomy, after all.

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

Of several minds: *Frank Getlein*

THE BOMBING OF HAIG

WHODUNIT? HOW ABOUT FORD, NIXON & KISSINGER?

ALTHOUGH it is not as widely known as it should be, the FBI has elaborated a whole new theory of political assassination. The occasion was the automobile bombing in Washington that killed Chilean refugee diplomat Orlando Letelier and an aide as they drove to work.

The FBI bustled into the case and while they failed to come up with any suspects, they came up almost at once with a new theory about that kind of crime and managed to peddle it to a normally somewhat discriminating, respectable Washington newspaper. The FBI theory was that Letelier had blown himself up, or, that his fellow Chilean refugees had blown him up in order to attract attention and sympathy to their cause.

As things worked out, the Bureau hardly had a chance to apply the ingenious theory to much effect before the man who actually did the assassination fell into their hands, copped a plea and thus stuck the FBI with tracking down the murderous agents of the Chilean military dictatorship instead of the more agreeable task of hanging the murders on Letelier's own friends and associates.

Still, it was a remarkable exercise of what Hercule Poirot, whose record in these matters is rather better than the Bureau's, used to call the little gray cells, and it deserves a fuller opportunity for application and testing.

As it happens, we have one. On the eve of his retirement from the Captain-Generalcy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Alexander Haig, the last loyal Nixonian and first Ford creation, was blown up as he was driving, like Letelier, from home to office. Unlike Letelier, Haig was unharmed by the car blast, a circumstance that makes the FBI theory even more attractive. Moreover, as the commander of vast numbers of professional bombers, detonation experts and other dynamiters, Haig was in a much easier position to set up a pseudo-assassination attempt than poor Letelier was to set up a real one. The more you think about it, the more feasible the FBI theory becomes when applied to the Haig case.

What would be his motive? In the original FBI formulation, it would be to arouse sympathy for himself and support for his cause, which is generally felt to be his own election as president of the United States or possibly as vice-president to John Connally.

How would the blowing up help that cause? It would immediately place him in the tradition we have developed recently

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of the assassination and attempted assassination of presidents and presidential candidates. While it is true that Connally can claim to have been in the car in which John Kennedy was riding when he was shot, Haig alone, as the primary campaigns shake down, could present himself as an actual target himself for assassinatory efforts.

Moreover, and perhaps more important, an assassination attempt he survived would give Haig an important link with George Wallace, whose following he has to attract to get the nomination.

Finally, the history of the attempt and his survival would be vitally useful for him during the campaigns, both primary and general. For the moment, at least, it is well established that part of all political campaigning in this country is the regular press conference, preferably televised, in which the candidate fields any question the press chooses to toss. There are three questions almost any reporter would want to ask Haig:

1. When you set up the presidential transition, was there an open or tacit understanding that Ford would get the presidency, Nixon the pardon and you NATO?

2. When you attributed the 18-minute erasure on Nixon's incriminating tapes to "sinister forces," whom exactly did you have in mind? And,

3. When you told Attorney-General Elliot Richardson that he was duty-bound to fire Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, who was demanding access to the incriminating tapes, because he, Richardson had "received an order from your commander-in-chief," what was your theory of the presidency in a still largely civilian republic with a written Constitution?

While any reporter would want to ask Haig those questions and while they all bear on his fitness or lack of fitness for the presidency, especially the third, it is essential for Haig to evade them. Not deny them, because while Richard Nixon is still alive, Haig and Ford have a loose cannon rolling around their deck as to question one.

But with the assassination attempt in his near past, Haig can quite reasonably scratch press conferences altogether, following the Nixon precedent in 1968, broadcasting instead cotton candy questions from "the public" as hand-selected, along with dynamite answers by the candidate.

When to all these considerations you add the announcement by the Belgian police that none of the familiar European terrorist gangs seems to have been involved, the FBI theory of political assassination seems to have come home: Haig blew himself up for political profit.

Tempting, but prudence counsels caution. So does the FBI theory, which includes an assassination victim's friends and followers as well as the victim himself as prime suspects.

Since his retirement from NATO, it is hard to say who Haig's followers might be, but surely as Americans use the word "friends," the category would include former business associates and those who raised him from the obscurity of a lieutenant-colonelcy to the command of the Free World's military forces. Namely:

First, of course, former president Ford. Ford, after all, did give Haig his job at NATO, whether as quid or quo is beside the point. And what does he get? The man is out for Ford's old job which Ford, however lackadaisically, is trying to regain for himself. Haig's abrupt departure would be a clear, if minor gain; more to the point would be the instant retaliation for an upstart act of *lèse majesté*.

Then, of course, there's Henry Kissinger, the man who, more than any other, discovered Haig's considerable talents for military climbing, gave him the finger ledges and toe holds to establish his record as all-time champ in that line in this country. Kissinger can flatter himself that he is about the one important servant of Richard Nixon to escape the debacle unharmed. But Haig, in contrast, not only escaped unharmed but escaped incomparably better off than Kissinger himself, in terms of public office. While Haig went on to one of the supreme positions in what had been nominally his profession all along, Kissinger was forced to keep body and soul together by becoming a public entertainer like Mork and Mindy and Charlie's Angels.

Beyond that, now, in 1979, Kissinger is only being mentioned as possible senator from New York, or even Connecticut, while Haig has been mentioned by several astute observers as a definite presidential possibility. Like Ford, Kissinger could well feel a sense of injured merit regarding Haig, more than enough motive for murder, as M. Poirot has established many times.

There are, however, countervailing considerations which I, at least, whatever other sleuths may think, find compelling. Chief of these is that there simply are not enough Haigs to arouse Kissinger's bombing instincts. On the record he likes to bomb lots of people at a time, hundreds, thousands. It would be out of character for him to bomb even the two carloads involved in the attempt. Not enough bodies to be worth counting.

On the other hand, Kissinger would be capable of bugging Haig, because on the record he likes bugging people one at a time and preferably employees or former employees, like Haig, but that, of course, is not the matter here under investigation.

Nixon himself is by no means to be dismissed as a possible suspect under the FBI theory of political assassination. The motivation? Simple: Why should Al Haig be the only Nixon associate never betrayed by Nixon? Like the murderer in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Nixon could have done the deed just to keep his record unblemished.

Such are the principal logical suspects according to FBI theory. The problem, of course, is that it's the Belgian police rather than the FBI that have the case, so the theory will most likely not be resorted to, the Belgians being notoriously conventional in police work, except, of course, for M. Poirot. Investigating the case along conventional lines, namely going after the people who hated the victim, the investigator will be overwhelmed by suspects: the three or four hundred field grade and general officers over whom Haig hacked his way to the top by personal politicking of a kind that enrages and humiliates conventional officers.

FRANK GETLEIN

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OLD TRUTHS COME TO LIFE—AND OLD ALIBIS, TOO

The new political rhetoric

J. PATRICK DOBEL

WHEN JIMMY CARTER, Jerry Brown, Tom Hayden, Gary Hart, conservatives and ecologists all begin to sound alike and speak of "limits," "discipline" and "sacrifice," it is time to take notice. In our runaway politics where people simultaneously seem to move right and left while standing still, politicians are desperately groping for a working political rhetoric which can explain, justify and even shape actions. For a rhetoric creates a common bond of understanding, trust and empathy between leaders and citizens; and when that bond breaks, as it has, the government can no longer satisfactorily explain itself and begins to lose its legitimacy.

Today, with disparate politicians converging on common themes, the faltering beginnings of a new rhetoric can be heard. These new terms bubble up from a potent brew of the right and the left and are heady enough to tempt the many moderates who still, sometimes sheepishly, believe in "basics" such as self-discipline or sacrifice for the common good. The concoction has reintroduced some old and important notions into our political discourse; but as it is being used, it too easily degenerates into a code to legitimize a national retreat from goals of economic and social justice.

The new rhetoric possesses a natural coherence; it hinges upon the importance of "limits" in an "age of scarcity." We now only reluctantly recognize the most obvious limits; on the one hand, declining, and therefore more costly, supplies of natural resources; on the other hand, increasing environmental degradation. But another set of structural limits has appeared in our mature capitalist economy. Consistent stagflation, enduring unemployment, declining productivity and the real possibility that the rate of return on capital investment has begun to decline—a critical prediction of Marx's—mean that the society can no longer rely upon affluence or perpetual growth to trickle down economic progress. Both sets of limits mean that only massive new investment generated by new profits and savings can provide the higher productivity needed to guarantee sufficient growth with limited inflation.

Confronting limitation requires discipline. The traditional Protestant ethic dictates that we discipline our desires now and save for better returns later. Discipline imposes limits upon one's desires; they enable us to save more and restrain our consumption in a world with a limited carrying capacity.

Such self-imposed discipline was called virtue in another age. Virtue meant that people were willing to make the necessary sacrifices for the welfare of others and the common good. So the new rhetoric leads us to the notion that the proper response to a world of limits is sacrifice inspired by civic virtue. Unfortunately, civic virtue has been in rather short supply in the United States for a long time. Warned by the fate of past rhetorical calls for individual self-discipline—remember Gerald Ford's Whip Inflation Now (WIN) button campaign?—the new rhetoric assumes that virtue and sacrifice can only flourish under duress and need the "moral equivalent of war." It piggy backs upon "energy crises," "investment crises" or any convenient crises to justify its call for action. Unbridled consumption and selfishness cannot be tolerated; self-discipline and sacrifice in daily life are the watchwords.

Surely the new rhetoric presents a refreshing counterpoint to the dreary themes of the "me" decade. Its key words recall some abiding truths about the demands of human community and fulfillment, truths often lost in the clamor for transcendental jogging shoes or narcissistic self-absorption. The new rhetoric may even lay the groundwork for a serious communal ethic as an alternative to privatized mass consumption. Some leaders have welcomed the energy crisis as an opportunity to return to a more community-oriented, simpler and ascetic life style. Commercials now tout that "less is better." But before we are seduced into a new asceticism, we had better ask upon whom does the burden of the limits and sacrifice fall.

AT THE OUTSET the new rhetoric presents a paradox: it seems that the more self-consciously sacrificing or morally responsible are major corporations in their behavior, the less efficiently they accommodate limits. Any moral imposition of

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limits in the interests of safety, health, future generations or the environment, we are told, upsets that finely-tuned mechanism of self-limitation—the "market." Harking back to Manchester liberalism, the new rhetoric reminds us that the unlimited exercise of self-interest (read greed) in the market place provides its own discipline; it respects limits by guaranteeing the most efficient use of limited resources. The corporations must act in a world whose values are inverted from those applying to the rest of the disciplined and self-sacrificing population. The business sector must be deregulated; direct and indirect price controls and public interest regulations must be eliminated. Price mechanisms and the market will adapt to limits and scarcity without any moral commitment.

The rest of the new rhetoric now starts to resemble a facsimile 1924 Republican fight song. Who must relearn the discipline and virtue of sacrifice? The answers are depressingly familiar.

Union workers must be willing to accept 7 percent salary increases in a world of 13 percent inflation and rising profits. The seasonally-adjusted earnings of workers have dropped to their lowest point since the 1975 recession and must continue to do so under the new wage and price guidelines. Workers must also accept the sacrifice of "obsolete" and "featherbedding" work rules, layoffs, lower workers' compensation awards and less frills like worker safety rules. All these are "necessary" transitions to squeeze more profits and, so it is hoped, more reinvestment and higher productivity from the corporations. Of course, all these sacrifices are "short term" and will redound to the workers with greater rewards.

In the great tradition of Victorian moralists like Dickens's Mr. Bounderby, the new rhetoric demands the transformation of the moral fiber of the poor. They must lower their insatiable appetite for basic social services. Welfare produces no jobs and with many payments pegged to inflation, it deprives us of needed capital by contributing both to higher taxes and higher inflation. Lower benefits, more "realistic" health care programs, higher unemployment rates, fewer people on welfare rolls, tighter application, screening and work requirements are all natural sacrifices for the poor, aged and infirm.

Limited social services and disciplined unions correlate with the need to restrain government and the high taxes which sap investment. The public sector and its unions must also accept the discipline of lower salaries, fewer perquisites and even layoffs. Bureaucracies' self-aggrandizing tendency to overregulate and impose untoward social cost upon investment must be reined in. But defense expenditures must be increased to reflect the new discipline and sacrifice entailed by the crisis of a resurgent Soviet militarism. The rest of the state must be subject to tax and expenditure limitations.

In a new twist, even the middle class does not escape the strictures. President Carter has publicly castigated it for too much consumption and not enough saving. The Council on Wage and Price Stability announced that "everyone" (read middle class) must bear sacrifices in order to whip inflation now. As a postscript, the upper and upper-middle classes already exercise admirable discipline and save a reasonable proportion of their income. They, too, are conveniently exempt from the sacrifices imposed by the new rhetoric.

The politics of limits has an ominous ring, especially in a country which has relied on unlimited and untargeted economic growth to provide upward mobility and avoid vicious redistributive politics. It is no wonder that labor unions, minorities and the poor have profound qualms about ecological rhetoric, especially when it conflates with the new conservative rhetoric. The world of limits cannot mean a world where the burdens of the new political discipline are borne by the poor, the workers and the middle class.

The new rhetoric degenerates into an old code when it makes two mistakes. First, it individuates lame for our current plight. It casts the moral burden on individuals and ignores more structural economic flaws such as oligopolistic markets with built-in inflationary tendencies or the "cultural contradiction of capitalism" wherein the economy spends billions in advertising to encourage spendthrift demand while needing disciplined savers. Second, the new rhetoric mistakes the *forms* of moral virtue—limits, self-discipline and self-sacrifice—for the content. The moral goals of civic virtue in a society based on care and respect consist of social justice, equal respect and equity for all citizens and basic social, economic and political guarantees which make a satisfying and even virtuous life possible. Only with the concrete common good as our lodestar can we realistically assess the new societal limits.

WITHOUT A DISCUSSION of the new redistributive and communal alternatives also inherent in the new rhetoric, let me suggest three rules to remember when listening to the new rhetoric.

1. The economic system—the mythical 'market'—cannot be trusted on its own to react in a way which guarantees the most productive response to investment dilemmas. On one hand, if the middle class and workers do lower their consumption and standard of living, demand would decline and with it much of the incentive for new investment. On the other hand, there are no guarantees that corporations will put increased earnings and savings into new domestic capital investment. They are obsessed with a "stress on fast profits" (*Wall Street Journal*) and are more likely to pursue increased acquisitions, buy new resource bases or invest abroad. A constant and careful system of incentives and regulation is even more needed in a world of limits.

2. Corporations on their own will not respect the environment or the unanticipated public consequences of their action. Corporate planning undervalues future generations, responds to resource scarcity only after it becomes evident and seeks a profit which does not take into account the social externalities which might affect the health and welfare of citizens. The moral discipline and sacrifice of corporations in regard to the integrity of the environment, the safety of workers or the unanticipated consequences of "rational" economic decisions cannot be taken for granted and must be kept under close, if

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more sophisticated, political scrutiny and government regulation.

3. The sacrifices must be distributed equitably, always distinguishing between the necessities of life with dignity and luxuries. All people must bear proportional burdens, and those better able to bear them should bear more. Reliance on pricing mechanisms, wage controls and cuts in governmental service are inherently regressive and become even more so as the inflation rate on necessities is double that of other commodities. It is all too easy to take S.I. Hayakawa's route and dismiss the effect of radical gasoline price-increases on the poor by pointing out that the poor "don't drive anyway." The present welfare-state apparatus may be inefficient, cumbersome and oppressive, but to throw it out without a clear idea of how to maintain its commitments is irresponsible and immoral. In a caring and humane democratic order, we cannot surrender the public goals of providing the necessities of food, shelter, education, health, work and hope for all citizens. A voluntary asceticism might be welcomed in Marin County but not in Watts.

The era of limits demands discipline, sacrifice and civic virtue. But it also demands equity, social and economic justice, and a clear, tenacious vision of just what we are sacrificing for and against what the limits limit us.

THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF ULSTER'S PROTESTANTS

'What d'ya mean? We're not Irish!'

JACK HOLLAND

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I was in a train traveling north from Belfast city, through the heartlands of Northern Ireland's Protestant majority—one million people caught up in Ireland's age-long conflict with the British. It is an area of low, rolling hills, and between them and the sea, a jumble of factories, red-brick houses and warren-like streets. Protestants have always dominated the industries in this corner of Ireland, which most of them regard as part of the United Kingdom.

It was a wet, winter's evening; a slight mist of Irish rain was falling, which in built-up areas has a most depressing effect. Looking out the window it was just possible to perceive the British flags flapping in the small gardens, or painted in garish colors on the gable walls of the working-class houses, alongside the anti-Catholic graffitti and the Protestant paramilitary slogans. This was the land Northern Ireland's Protestants have traditionally sworn will remain "British."

In the battered railway carriage were three Protestant youths, obviously returning home from work to one of the little ghetto towns on the outskirts of Belfast. I guessed they were apprentices in one of the big factories (which only employ Protestants) in the north of the city. They were exuberant—it was Friday, payday—dressed in the uniform of the British and Irish working class: jeans, short boots and short, heavy black jackets. They were play-acting, fighting among themselves, throwing litter out the window and threatening to throw each other after it. In the middle of the mayhem one of the youths shouted, breathlessly, "No wonder they say the Irish are mad!" There was a sudden silence. His two companions looked at him, and he almost blushed with embarrassment. Then the biggest one said: "Hi, what d'ya mean? We're not Irish. We're British." They all grinned at each other and started another round of distracting activity.

Somewhere, not far under the surface of even the most unreflecting of Northern Ireland's Protestant population, lies the same dilemma: the problem of their national identity. It is a dilemma that recently has assumed a certain political urgency as many in Northern Ireland's so-called "loyalist" community have started questioning their traditional political beliefs.

TEN YEARS ago few Protestants would have admitted having any doubt as to whom they owed their allegiance, or whether or not they were British or Irish. The vast majority of them have (for over a century at least) regarded themselves as British. Their flag was the Union Jack. But since 1969, and the start of the latest Irish-British conflict, disquiet among "loyalists" has grown. They are uneasy about British intentions, insecure about their own future and their status within the United Kingdom. They feel let down by England, abandoned by the state to which they have looked since 1921, when Northern Ireland was created, as their protector from Catholic IRA subversion. Currently, many of them are angry enough to consider a drastic revision of their old political position. One sign is the recent moves by the Ulster Defence Association, the largest of the Protestant paramilitary organizations, to pursue the idea of an Independent Northern Ireland—cut loose from London and from Dublin.

It is not the first time that the Protestants of that northeastern corner of Ireland have made radical noises. Since the 17th

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century, when they were first settled there from Scotland and England by the English, who drove the native Irish off the land, they have several times found themselves at odds with their political guarantor in London.

The two groups' interests have not always been identical. In 1798 it was the liberal Protestant middle classes of Ulster which struck a rebellion against the British that spread throughout Ireland; then they fought and died for an Irish Republic, a concept now anathema to most of their descendants. But by the end of the 19th century, that radicalism had almost completely died out; the majority of Protestants were firmly on the side of the British crown, which promoted their economic interests over that of their fellow citizens, the mostly impoverished Catholics. After the creation of the Northern Ireland state, that relationship was cemented by the British government, which permitted the local Protestant-controlled parliament outside Belfast to run a blatantly sectarian state, denying equal opportunities to Catholics in housing and jobs, and maintaining a system of economic privilege that until recently sufficed to assure the loyalties of Protestants to England.

Since 1969, however, the Protestants have made it clear that their loyalty has its price—that it is conditional on Britain doing what the Protestants want it to do. As soon as the British appeared to be yielding to demands for reform from Catholics, the Protestants have threatened civil war and *coup d' etat*. They have threatened, in other words, to go the way the white Rhodesians went in 1966 when they established an independent, minority-controlled state in defiance of the Westminster parliament.

On three occasions over the last ten years, Northern Ireland loyalists have seemed close to taking such a step. In 1972 50,000 hooded men from the Ulster Defence Association took control of large areas of Belfast, blocking the movement of British troops and threatening an all-out civil war unless the Westminster government acted more effectively against the IRA. A major confrontation between the UDA and the British army was narrowly avoided. Two years later, the UDA pushed Northern Ireland to the brink once again when they organized the overthrow of the Northern Ireland Power-sharing Government—the only such government ever to include Catholics in it. In 1977 a planned UDA move to paralyze the area failed; many believed it was a first step toward a coup.

SINCE THEN, however, there have been changes. Now the talk of independence—mostly coming from the UDA—is not accompanied by threats of massacre and mayhem, but by assurances and promises that Catholics will be safe. In fact, UDA figures have been attempting to win Catholic support for their program to get the idea of Northern Ireland independence promoted. (One leading Catholic politician in Belfast, Paddy Devlin, has come out in support of it.)

Many Catholics are rightly asking, "Why the change of heart?" The UDA, after all, has been responsible for more sectarian violence in Northern Ireland than any other organization. It has murdered over 400 people, most of them ordinary Catholics. Some indication of what the UDA is now saying was given last fall, when U.S. Congressmen Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg met UDA leaders in Belfast during a fact-finding trip to Ireland. A discussion was held between the Congressmen and two UDA leaders, Andy Tyrie, the Supreme Commander of the organization, and Glenn Barr, who sometimes acts as its spokesman. (The discussion was published recently in the report based on their findings.)

Andy Tyrie explained the dilemma and the current Protestant frustrations with British rule in Northern Ireland like this: "If I was to take you [Congressman Fish] to Bradford, or Birmingham, or London, or anywhere in England, you would be accepted as an American. But they hear my accent and they say, oh, he is Irish. They [the English] don't treat me as British. . . . I am one of the black Irish." Tyrie went on to warn: "Eventually maybe someday the Protestant paramilitaries are going to turn their guns on the British soldiers as well. Because if Britain continues to treat us the way they have been treating us, you know, we are going to have to take a stand somewhere."

Tyrie is a shrewd and capable man who has managed to stay on top of the UDA longer than any of his predecessors, most of whom fell victim to internal feuds. He did not say it, but the UDA has already, on several occasions, turned its guns on the British army and police, and killed several of them. But the vast majority of their victims have been Catholics. Even here, however, according to Tyrie, there have been changes. He said to Congressman Fish: "There has been no sectarian violence from the Ulster Defence Association for the last two. . . . I ask, what are we fighting for, and why are we killing each other and who is gaining from it. What I have done and what the Council of the organization has said to the membership is if you feel that you want to have a war with somebody then, damn, fight yours properly. If you want to fight the IRA fight the IRA . . . but don't shoot the wee man that is going to work or the wee man just because he is a Roman Catholic or because he supports a Roman Catholic football team."

The list of "wee men" shot by the UDA because they were Catholics is a very long one, and it contains some of the worst brutalities committed since the current troubles began. For it is unfortunately another characteristic of Protestant insecurity about their identity and their future, that they have often expressed it with a terrible vengeance against those whom they see as the enemy—Northern Ireland's Catholic minority.

THOUGH THE UDA has often been called the Protestant counterpart of the IRA, a brief look at the kind of violence they have perpetrated over the years will not support such a

On August 11, after three days and nights of violence, 15,000 Protestants marched through Londonderry under tight security but without incident. It was a similar Apprentice Boys march, an annual celebration of Protestant ascendancy in Ulster, that led to bloody fighting in Bogside, Londonderry's Catholic section ten years ago.

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comparison. If they are like any other paramilitary group, it is perhaps the Ku Klux Klan. Many of their victims have been tortured and degraded, in a way typical of racial violence, before being killed; they have expressed their loathing of Catholics in the same excremental rhetoric reserved for those believed to be racially inferior. And, paradoxically, they have committed their violent acts in the name of law and order. This has meant that, like their national identity, their attitude to the violence they perpetrate is frequently ambivalent and confused—as if they want to believe deep down that they have not done it.

There is a curious example of this schizophrenia in a little handbook of songs put out by a UDA man interned in the Maze Prison (formerly Long Kesh) in 1974. Most of the songs celebrate the killing and humiliation of Catholics. The "Battle of Bombay Street" begins: "On the 14th of August we took a/ Little trip, up along Bombay St./ And burned out all the shit. . . ." This refers to an incident in August, 1969, when a Catholic street was razed to the ground by mobs of Protestants in Belfast. But a few pages on we read, in another reference to the same event: "Intimidation cried the Provies [IRA] / After burning their own homes/ In Bombay Street, and Lower Falls. . . ." The songwriter, no longer boasting about "burning out the shit," now claims that the Catholics burned their own houses and blamed it on the Protestants. Throughout the years, Northern Ireland Protestant militants have frequently swung between boasting about their violent acts and denying that they ever did them. It seems that they cannot reconcile their identification with law and order and their responsibility for violent and criminal acts which that law condemns.

But Tyrie was right in his discussion with Fish and Eilberg: the UDA has stopped blatantly sectarian murders since about 1977. According to Tyrie's companion, Glenn Barr, who joined in the interview with the U.S. Congressmen, "We believe there has to be a starting point [for reconciliation]. So, we have two options. As a paramilitary organization we can say, turn the lads loose. Let them go out and shoot all the Catholics and let's have a civil war. At the end of the day we have still got to find a solution. We are saying, let's go for a solution now rather than fight and then look for a solution."

That, at least, is a welcome development. There is also some hope to be derived from the fact that Protestants like Tyrie are now searching for new kinds of political solutions—and have at least temporarily stopped chanting the old pro-British slogans which have stultified Protestant political thinking for so long. The solution they are now advocating, an independent Northern Ireland, is a step in the right direction. Whether it will get much further is to be doubted; it already has been denounced by the IRA, and the British, of course, will have nothing to do with it at present. With two of the participants in Northern Ireland's bloody triangle opposed or uninterested, it is hard to see how the UDA's initiative can develop.

If it collapses, as is likely, what next for Ulster's Protestants? For two years the UDA has been largely able to stop its gunmen running loose against Catholics. But the history of that organization, which has for nearly a decade expressed the fears and frustrations of working-class Protestants, is not a very reassuring one on the matter of restraint. The next few months might well indicate whether or not they have learnt anything from that history of needless bloodshed.

Richard A. Hawley

Aloft

The wide window of this loft
  Frames nothing but leaf and light,
Eave to eave, a medium of maple;
  Heavy with late summer, racks of full feathers
Rise and fall slowly with the breeze,
  Hushes overwhelming hushes.

In deep recesses, patches of limb and twig
  Suggest (absurdly) superstructure to softness—
As if clouds effaced reveal their chalky wires
  Or a gust might whisk a breaker from its lath.

Secrets of a leafy wall—
  Lovely and alien as coral,
Undulating like seaweed:
  Lull and lure. I dream myself
Falling down into it, out of it

Sudden as an apple
  Through leaves and leaves, indifferent as air.

Sister Ellen Murphy

Elm Tree and Other Shadows

The elm at the corner is down;
  chips of its tall life fragments in the snow
    scattered at random from those rings of years.

The substance of the shadow's branch is gone
  that gave my wall its morning play of grace
    the year around and made leaf, branch and bird

a presence in my room. Now this profound
  removal changes everything in sight.
    The window frames become

straight shadows of themselves
  in sun. Through empty panes of light
    my random memories gather shade on shade

the substance of the elm to set it down.

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'THOSE WISE RESTRAINTS WHICH MAKE MAN FREE'

Parents, children & the Supreme Court

MAURICE DeG. FORD

IN TWO MAJOR decisions handed down in late June and early July, the United States Supreme Court reached seemingly contradictory results. The Justices were unanimous in concluding that parents may sign their children into mental institutions without a prior judicial hearing. The Justices were also almost unanimous in striking down a Massachusetts statute which required parental consent before an abortion can be performed on a minor. Indeed, parents may not even have the right to be notified that their daughter is considering an abortion. Can these decisions be reconciled? In attempting to do so, we may learn much about the Supreme Court's latest thinking on the respective rights of parent and child.

The child commitment case, *Parham v. J.L.*, involved a Georgia law that, like similar laws in most other states, allows a parent to sign the consent forms for "voluntary" admission of a minor to a mental hospital. Riding the crest of the "childrens' rights" movement, lawyers for the children had argued that placing a child, against his will, in an insane asylum is as bad, if not worse, than incarcerating that child in jail, so great are the loss of liberty, the consequent stigma and the deteriorating conditions of many in-patient mental health facilities. Moreover, the parents, rather than the child, may be the central problem and they should not be allowed to respond to it by disposing of their child. "Due process of law," it was urged, requires the same safeguards against abuse—including the right to counsel and to independent psychiatric expert testimony on one's behalf—that the Supreme Court guaranteed juvenile offenders in its 1967 landmark decision, *In re Gault*. In a famous opinion in the *Gault* case, Justice Abe Fortas noted the enormous sloppiness, in the guise of paternalistic concern, with which juvenile court proceedings were often conducted. Safeguarding "the welfare of the child" could be a pretext for railroading him into a juvenile detention center to get him out of an inadequate parent's or disturbed neighbor's hair. The Court held that "due process" required a full adversary hearing, surrounded by many procedural protections (although not necessarily the right to trial by jury).

In *Parham v. J.L.* both the Federal District Court and Court of Appeals agreed with lawyers for the children. The Supreme Court, however, overturned their decisions. Its review of the procedures employed in admitting children to mental health facilities in Georgia indicated that admission took place only after a careful diagnostic medical inquiry. Thus the psychiatrist was always a check on parents. Several other points militated against requiring a formal, judicial hearing prior to admission. First, parents might be frightened away from seeking necessary psychiatric help for their children if they knew they had to face the prospect of a legal, adversary battle. Second, again to use the phraseology of Justice Brennan, "the hearings themselves might delay treatment of children whose home life has become impossible and who require some form of immediate state care." Third, an adversary hearing might only serve to exacerbate those tensions in the parent-child relationship which may have caused hospitalization initially. The child will eventually have to go back home with the parents and the Justices wanted to preserve an atmosphere where the parents could make a maximum contribution to the child's care.

The Massachusetts abortion statute, whose constitutionality was examined in *Belotti v. Baird*, required that parental consent be secured before an abortion could be performed on an unmarried girl under 18, provided that if either parent refused consent, a judge could nonetheless order the abortion "for good cause shown." The Supreme Court held that this trammeled too closely upon the freedom of minors. The abortion decision, the Court had earlier ruled in *Roe v. Wade*, involved a "fundamental" right of privacy, and it was a decision that could not be postponed.

AT STAKE in both cases were matters going to the essence of the parent-child relationship. "For centuries," wrote Justice Potter Stewart in a concurring opinion in *Parham v. J.L.*, "it has been a canon of the common law that parents speak for their minor children. So deeply imbedded in our traditions is this principle that the Constitution itself may compel a State to respect it." And in *Bellotti v. Baird*, Justice Lewis Powell called attention to "the unique role in our society of the family, the institution by which 'we inculcate and pass down many of our most cherished values, moral and cultural.' " The danger, of course, arises when parents' "cherished . . . moral and cultural" values threaten to overwhelm the child, almost literally straitjacketing him or her into a mental institution for "deviant" behavior, or refusing, for deeply-held religious

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reasons, to grant permission for an abortion.

One of the most interesting cases to have come before the Court in this regard is the case of the Old Order Amish, *Wisconsin v. Yoder*. Jonas Yoder and Adin Yutzy had been fined, on a criminal complaint, for refusing to send their children to high school, in violation of Wisconsin's compulsory attendance law. They viewed "secondary school education as an impermissible exposure of their children to a 'worldly' influence in conflict with their beliefs. The high school tends to emphasize intellectual and scientific accomplishments, self-distinction, competitiveness, worldly success and social life with other students." Amish society, by contrast, emphasized "a life of 'goodness' rather than a life of intellect. . . ."

The Court decided, on First Amendment grounds of freedom of religion, that Amish parents did have the right to keep their children out of the public schools after the eighth grade. On the farm—for the Amish were devoted "to a life in harmony with nature and the soil"—the Amish community in fact provided strong vocational education, albeit for a limited range of vocations. There was, moreover, no evidence at the trial that the Amish children concerned objected to the judgment of their parents. (A significant number of the Justices said that the case would take on a very different character if the children had objected.) But clearly, in a modern technological society, the typical Amish child would be ill-equipped, both in training and spiritual development, to cope with a city like Chicago if he or she suddenly got the urge to move there.

In the Amish case, the Court noted "the fundamental interest of parents . . . to guide the religious future and education of their children," and similarly Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote for the majority in *Parham v. J.L.*: "Our jurisprudence historically has reflected Western Civilization concelts of the family as a unit with broad parental authority over children. . . . Surely parents have a duty to recognize symptoms of illness and to seek and follow medical advice. The law's concept of the family rests on a presumption that parents possess what a child lacks in maturity, experience and capacity for judgment required for making life's difficult decisions. More important, historically it has recognized that natural bonds of affection lead parents to act in the best interests of their children."

Many, however, are far more skeptical than the Chief Justice about the congruence between parents' "natural bonds of affection" and their children's welfare. Every day, mental health professionals come across children in trouble precisely *because* their parents' conscious and unconscious needs, acted out through the demands placed upon them, are not at all in the children's "best interests."

ON WHAT BASIS, then, is the Supreme Court dividing decision-making responsibility between parent and child? Not surprisingly, rather than acting syllogistically according to predetermined maxims, the Justices have tried to balance a number of factors. "First, the private interest that will be affected by the official action; second, the risk of an erroneous deprivation of such interest through the procedures used, and the probable value, if any, of additional or substitute procedural safeguards; and finally, the Government's interest, including the function involved and the fiscal and administrative burdens that the additional or substitute procedural requirement would entail." Applying these criteria, however, still leaves room for considerable judicial subjectivity.

In *Parham v. J.L.*, the majority of the Court distinguished the situation of the child brought by his parents for admission to a mental hospital hospital from that of the juvenile delinquent labeled as criminal. The former was, the Court thought, not nearly as stigmatizing. "The state through its voluntary commitment procedures does not 'label' the child; it provides a diagnosis and treatment that medical specialists conclude the child requires." But one wonders how many children experience the reality of commitment in such a benign way. The majority rather believed that it might be equally, if not more, stigmatizing for a child to be out of the hospital, if he was disturbed. "In terms of public reaction, the child who exhibits abnormal behavior may be seriously injured by an erroneous decision not to commit. . . . A person needing, but not receiving, appropriate medical care may well face even greater social ostracism resulting from the observable symptoms of an untreated disorder."

Chief Justice Burger's opinion for the Court also stressed that "due process of law" does not, in every instance, have to be *judicial* process. For example, when a pupil "acts up" in school, he does not have the automatic right to go to court before he is disciplined. As long as the school's fair and internal procedures for discussion are followed, the law will be satisfied.

The majority saw little risk of error in the admission procedures used in the state of Georgia. In practice, most children are seen by a family doctor or at a community mental health clinic before being brought by their parents to an in-patient facility. So there is a double opportunity to make sure that something is really wrong with a child. Often he is referred by the community clinic only after out-patient treatment has failed. Despite the fallibility of psychiatric diagnosis, Chief Justice Burger and Justices White, Blackmun, Powell and Rehnquist, believed that since admission questions are essentially medical in character, a trained doctor is far more likely to make a correct decision than a judge. They thought "the supposed protections of an adversary proceeding . . . may well be more illusory than real."

The Court's decision in the child commitment case thus continues a trend by the Burger Court to respect psychiatric decision making, even in contexts which admittedly involve a "massive curtailment of liberty." The Thomas Szaszes of this world and the Young Turks of the legal profession—those mental health advocates who want to place almost every psychiatric decision in a legal straitjacket—have suffered a defeat, as they did earlier this term in the Court's unanimous decision in *Addington v. Texas*.

In the *Addington* case, which dealt with the standards for adult commitment, counsel for the petitioner asked the Su-

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preme Court to apply the same rule for "incarceration" in a mental hospital as is constitutionally required in criminal proceedings—that "dangerousness to self or others," like guilt, must be proven "beyond a reasonable doubt." But the Court prudentially realized that this would place upon the predictive powers of psychiatry an unrealistically impossible burden. "The subtleties and nuances of psychiatric diagnosis render certainties virtually beyond reach in most situations. The reasonable doubt standard of criminal law functions in its realm," again wrote Chief Justice Burger, "because there the standard is addressed to specific, knowable facts. Psychiatric diagnosis in contrast, is to a large extent based on medical 'impressions' drawn from subjective analysis and filtered through the experience of the diagnostician. This process often makes it very difficult for the expert physician to offer definite conclusions about any particular patient."

SUCH CONFIDENCE in the independent check of admitting psychiatrists and medically informed referral sources has, not surprisingly, been looked upon with dismay by a number of civil libertarians. Columnist Ellen Goodman, for one, states that "a family in stress may not have the information and emotional stability to make a good judgment. A state agency [serving as guardian] may not care. Nor can we trust the hospital for an impartial judgment. If surgeons have a bias toward surgery, institutional psychiatrists often have a bias towards institutional psychiatry." She implies that the Burger Court has retrenched again.

Yet one factor that civil libertarians, like Ellen Goodman, do not seem to appreciate adequately is the *cost* of providing hearings for each child. The American Psychiatric Association, which, under the leadership of Dr. Alan Stone, took an active role in the litigation, called the Court's attention to the fact that the average hospital psychiatrist is only able to devote 47 percent of his time to patient care. Adding "time-consuming procedural minuets before the admission" would only cut this figure down. Quoting Federal Court of Appeals Judge Henry Friendly, the majority recognized that "procedural requirements entail the expenditure of limited resources" and "that at some point the benefits to individuals from an additional safeguard is substantially outweighed by the cost of providing such protection, and that the expense in protecting those likely to be found undeserving will probably come out of the pockets of the deserving."

In the last two decades . . . perhaps the most persistent search in constitutional law has been to identify which personal values should be deemed "fundamental." . . . But . . . discovering "fundamental" values can be tremendously subjective.

IN TERMS of gravity, most laymen would probably equate the deprivation a child experiences if involuntarily placed by his parents in a mental hospital and the detriment a girl experiences if her parents refuse consent for an abortion. But, as Justice Stewart pointed out in a concurring opinion in the *Parham* case, a constitutional distinction has evolved in our jurisprudence. Since the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, an expectant mother's right to decide upon an abortion—considered of the essence of the right to privacy—has been deemed a *fundamental* substantive constitutional right, whereas, in terms of the Court's precedents, there has been no similar "fundamental" right not to be hospitalized for psychiatric treatment. In the last two decades, partly due to the influence of the late Alexander M. Bickel, Yale's famous constitutional scholar, perhaps the most persistent search in constitutional law has been to identify which personal values should be deemed "fundamental" in our law and stringently safeguarded by the federal courts against legislative intrusion. Judges searching for the sources of these "fundamental" values have ranged from natural law to the dictates of "reason" to "enduring neutral principles" to the judge's own conscience. But, as John Hart Ely (one of Professor Bickel's former students) points out in a recent issue of the *Harvard Law Review*, discovering "fundamental" values can be tremendously subjective—involving the opposite of a desired more neutral judicial role. In effect, *Parham* was a test case as to whether a new "fundamental" value should be added to the list.

The "fundamental" right to a private decision about abortion had been clearly extended to minors in an earlier case, *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth*. In that instance the Supreme Court held that a state may not impose a blanket requirement giving a parent (or person *in loco parentis*) an absolute, even arbitrary, veto over whether a pregnancy should be terminated. Even though the Massachusetts statute gave the child the right to have a judge permit the abortion if her parents refused, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court had ruled that any available parent must be given notice of the pendencyof judicial proceedings. The United States Supreme Court said, however, that, given the fact that many parents hold such strong views on the subject and that "young pregnant mothers, especially those living at home, are particularly vulnerable to their parents' efforts to obstruct both an abortion and their access to court," it would be "unrealistic" to believe that the mere existence of the legal right to go to court would provide "an effective avenue of relief to those who need it the most."

What linked the Court's conclusion in *Belotti v. Baird* to its earlier views in *Parham v. J.L.* was the opinion offered by four Justices and written by Justice Lewis Powell. It recited an increasingly familiar litany of the reasons why the constitutional rights of children should not be deemed co-extensive with those of adults. Children were "peculiarly vulnerable,"

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especially in "their inability to make decisions in an informed, mature manner." Parental involvement in child rearing was very important. Citing a 1925 case—*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*—which upheld the right of parents to send their children to parochial and private schools, rather than rely on the public school system, the Court said. "The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare the child for 'additional obligations,' " such as the inculcation of moral standards and religious beliefs.

Notwithstanding this, Justice Powell called attention to the peculiar nature of the abortion decision. If, for example, a minor desires to marry before the age of majority, the consequence, if permission is refused, is just to postpone that decision. But a pregnant adolescent has to make a rapid decision about whether or not to abort or else it will be made by default. Moreover, given the often low level of education, employment skills and finances of many teenagers who get pregnant, coupled with the difficult psychological task (if the baby is born) of bringing up a child before one has completed one's own adolescence, a minor does not need severe obstacles in the way if she chooses to abort. Parents' religious convictions are commonly just such obstacles. As in the case of the Amish, there is a central question of whose religion is involved—the parents' or the child's.

Was there any allowable parental role in the abortion decision of a minor? In what resembled an advisory opinion to any legislature attempting to draft a constitutional statute, Powell and his three concurring justices distinguished between a minor found by a judge to be mature enough to make her own abortion decision and one found not sufficiently mature. In the former case, the judge must respect the minor's decision, even if he or she personally disagreed or thought it not in the minor's best interests. If, however, the judge does not find the minor mature enough, the judge (a) may directly, and in the absence of parental consultation, decide whether the abortion is or is not in her best interests or (b) may "defer decision until there is parental consultation in which the court may participate."

This opinion leaves troublesome questions. In theory one can distinguish between ruling on a minor's maturity to make a decision and ruling on the merits of that decision itself. In practice a judge's views on the decision itself, namely, the request for an abortion, are likely to color his or her estimation of the minor's maturity. And what happens in those communities where there is only one judge—with very set opinions? Would pro-abortion judges find all minors seeking abortions sufficiently mature and none in need of parental guidance? Would anti-abortion judges rule all such minors immature and require parental consultation, which might place heavy pressure on a minor to fall into line with parental views? How much protection for pregnant girls would remain in such situations?

These questions as well as a preference for only deciding issues posed by actual, specific cases and statutes kept Justices Stevens, Brennan, Marshall and Blackmun from joining Justice Powell's "advisory" exercise of outlining a possible statute, even though they agreed on the Massachusetts law's unconstitutionality.

The Supreme Court seems to have come down rather strongly on the side of traditional parental rights and for the family—rather than the judicial system—as the appropriate unit for decision making.

The practical reality of how admission to state mental hospitals might work likewise gave Justices Brennan, Marshall and Stevens (who probably constitute the Court's new liberal wing) pause in the *Parham* case. They were more worried about the chances for an erroneous commitment where children were concerned, especially when, as they viewed the Georgia practice, "the psychiatrist interviews the child during a period of abnormal stress in connection with the commitment and without adequate time or opportunity to become acquainted with the patient." They also believed childhood "a particularly vulnerable time of life and children erroneously institutionalized during their formative years may bear the scars for the rest of their lives." Therefore they insisted, in a partial dissent, that there must be a prompt *post*-admission hearing to determine if the initial decision to admit—sometimes made in crisis—was appropriately made. Georgia's procedures seemed to them defective in this regard. In addition, the three Justices would require a *prior* judicial hearing whose state social workers sought to commit wards of the state. The danger of "dumping" unwanted, difficult children seemed too great. "The social worker-child relationship is not deserving of the special protection and deference accorded to the parent-child relationship," wrote Justice Brennan. In both the abortion and child commitment cases, where the risk of error poses such large consequences for children's lives, these positions seem constitutionally correct.

At each June's commencement, the traditional Harvard formula for conferring degrees in law declares that the candidates "are ready to aid in the shaping and application of those wise restraints which make men free." Freedom, in other words, seems to have as one of its inherent components a certain amount of restraint. In its recent grappling with the constitutionally proper relationship between parent and child, the Supreme Court seems to have come down rather strongly on the side of traditional parental rights and for the family—rather than the judicial system—as the appropriate unit for decision making. It seems that, in an age where so many societal pressures tend to fragment the family in favor of individual autonomy, a certain amount of restraint in the service of a more perfect freedom is in order.

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SUMMER THOUGHTS ON SEX AND CREATIVITY

Motherhood & mythology

ANNA MARIA MURDOCH

I HAVE SAT this summer in my garden watching bees and yellow-jackets flitting through our raspberry canes. The raspberries have been good this year, and now the canes stand dry, stick-looking, with limp leaves and tangled branches. We have eaten all the goodness from them. But the bees still come, humming over us where we sit, circling the late yellow-flowering broccoli gone to seed. We are reading; my son sitting snug between my thighs, smooth bulwarks against any stings, while splashy sounds of other siblings reach us now and then above the hums. Niobe-like, languid and proud, I hold him at the end of summer, his golden skin challenging any radiance sent down from the sky. Smooth rounded-brownness, now squirming to be off; white soles flashing as he races through the meadow to join the others, crushing wild strawberries and clover with his heels.

[Niobe]

My own Achilles. I must whisper of my pride even here in this garden. Myths and archetypes float like pollen in the air. Time and space do not dissipate the passions aroused by mother love. I pick up my book on mythology. It was hubris which destroyed Niobe. Niobe, who was so proud of her seven sons and seven daughters that she once boasted that their beauty could rival that of Leto's children. No mean boast, for Leto's children, fathered by the great god Zeus himself, were the glorious Apollo and long-legged Artemis. Leto had labored nine days to give birth to Apollo, clinging to a palm tree with her encircled arms, for Hera, Zeus's wife, had forbidden the goddess of childbirth to assist her. At last he was brought forth, and indeed all the jealous fears of Hera were fulfilled, for Apollo was the embodiment of the Hellenic spirit. He was the god of light, and music, and had the gift of prophecy as well. Foolish Niobe to set her sights so high. Like avenging falcons, Apollo and his sister swooped down on Niobe's children and killed them all with their bows and arrows. Weeping Niobe was turned to marble and her tears formed a running stream upon its surface.

[Demeter]

Summer is nearly over and the blue Berkshire hills on my horizon are lit here and there with early red and yellow leaves, the chlorophyl sucked out by the heat of August days. Soon the hills will be ablaze with autumn tints, a never tiring sight. Indian folklore tells that there was once a great bear hunt in the sky and when the hunter fought the bear, the blood, dripping down to earth turned the leaves to red; and where the great bear's yellow fat ran over the edge of the clouds, the leaves it touched were turned to gold. I sit musing on myths and folk-tales with mixed late-summer emotions. In the city, removed from nature's patterns, my thoughts don't run so. But here, faced daily with the signs of earth's cycle, fecundity and agriculture, birth and death, are intermingled. I am the earth, my offspring are saplings produced by tilling and warmth. I see them grow and change. Autumn reminds me of the coming white-winter, the inevitable separation.

Demeter was the original earth-goddess, perhaps the only mother, Euripides declared, who overturned "this last and crowning sorrow of all mortals." Her daughter, Persephone was abducted by Hades, Lord of the Dead, and taken away beneath the earth to live with him. Demeter wandered the earth wailing and mourning. She accused Zeus of neglecting his duties in allowing his brother to abduct Persephone. She vowed to let no plants or food grow on earth until her daughter was returned to her. And, indeed for one long, thirsty year the earth was utterly barren. At last Zeus begged his brother to allow Persephone to return to her mother.

[Thetis]

But I have no Demetrian power to yoke my children to me. I am rather more like Thetis of the silver feet, who drifts under the ocean with her handmaidens, the Nereids, pushing seaweed from her hair and, as we read in the *Iliad*, lamenting her knowledge of her son's mortality:

> Woe is me, unhappy mother of a noble son. I bore a lovely boy, perfect and strong, a hero above heroes. He ran up like a slim tree, I tended him like a choice plant in the garden, I let him go in the fleet to fight against Ilios: but I shall never have him back again, he will never return to his father's house. As long as he lives and sees the light of the sun he has only sorrow, and I can do nothing to help him.

Poor Thetis, mother of that greatest of heroes, Achilles, was a goddess burdened with the pain of all mortal mothers, the knowledge that his firm youthful flesh would one day rot, and that there was nothing she could do to stop it. No path of avoidance she could take. It was fated. One must accept.

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I must let go, loosen the threads like weeds, that bind my children to my hair. Finger-splaying, comb them out till they float free, rising like bubbles to the surface where they can swim, transparent seahorses on the waves. The male seahorse carries the eggs. Is that my freedom? Or theirs, my children?

[Clytemnestra]

My children shout. Thoughts scatter like shards. I try to reconstruct the bubble. Do fathers feel the same, wanting to let go; not wanting to let go; freedom or chains? Or does the biological function of the mother make her love her child more? I know without a doubt what womb these children came from. They are mine. There are no lingering dark corners in my mind.

In the *Odyssey*, Athena questions Telemakhos, "You must" she asks "be Odysseus's boy? The way your head is shaped, the fine eyes, yes, how like him!" But the boy replies: "My mother says I am his son; I know not surely. Who has known his own engendering?" In *Myth, Religion and Mother Right*, J.J. Bachofen's thesis on the existence of a pre-Hellenic matriarchy, Bachofen expands this theory of the uterine link between child and mother to that of the *uterini*, children of the same uterus. They are closer, he argues, than are the *consanguineri*, those children engendered by the same father. Thus he quotes Lycaon, son of Priam, who shouts out, in order to save his life, to Achilles: "I am not from the same womb as Hector, he who killed your powerful and kindly companion." And who can forget Antigone's passionate defense of her beloved Polynices, or those brother-sister murderers, Orestes and Elektra? My God, what an added torture for Clytemnestra. Nights in bed with cowardly Aegisthus could hardly have been worth it.

But the real reason for Clytemnestra's murder of her husband was her towering anger against him for sacrificing her daughter Iphigenia to the winds. Her darling "long-wept" blossom" of herself. Orestes was a little boy then. Like mine. Clytemnestra sent him away, probably for his protection. Why, then, when he grew up did he turn against his mother, the wronged wife, the sorrowing mother? And why did Elektra too, the image of Iphigenia, turn against her mother, and support the cause of revenge for her father's death? Does this disprove the bond of the *uterini*? Or is the reason perhaps that myths, as they have come down to us, written by the great Greek tragedians, have been written by sons—not daughters? Were the fears of men to be allayed, the power of the womb destroyed, by punishing mothers for the presence of those dark corners?

A cool afternoon breeze rouses me. It rustles the tops of the corn. I must go in. There are things to be done. I call to the children not to catch cold.

ONE EVENING when the sun was sinking like a great orange globe behind the woods and the children were darting in and out of the house like moths round a candle, I picked up a book a guest had given me. Pungent drafts of rosemary roasting in the oven with the meat were carried on the air. The kitchen beckoned. Children called. My typewriter yawned, a grey question-mark in the room. Distractions of a summer evening. I flicked open a page—the book was Tillie Olsen's *Silences*—and the sentence jumped at me: "Almost no mothers—as almost no part-time, part-self persons—have created enduring literature. . . ."

[Pandora]

I feel as though I have got too close to my daughter's horse and been kicked in the stomach. Is it true? Part-person. Parturition. By being whole, have I become less? Has all the creativity I once felt in my pen been confined to that creativity between my legs? A sick joke is woman. Like the gift of Pandora played by Zeus upon men. Let them pay for the price of fire, he decreed, and ordered Hermes to add to his creation, to "put lies, and wheedling words of falsehoods, and a treacherous nature . . . to be a sorrow to men who eat bread." And so Pandora was created. Punishment for sexual desire. In the process of sexual fulfillment, are mothers to pay too? Am I to be left as silent as the marble mound that once was Niobe?

[Medea]

Two names immediately jump to mind. Jane Austen and George Eliot. I have been reading *Middlemarch* this summer. Eliot's heroine, Dorothea, nearly dies in childbirth. Fecundity and death. Is that how freedom is to be achieved? Medea killed her children. Her revenge was against Jason. And yet she asked Aegeus what the oracle had advised him on the subject of his own infertility. Aegeus had replied: "I am not to open the cock that projects from the skin. . . ." And she interrupts; "Till you do what? Till you reach what land?" For Medea that solution is too late. She has her children. Her road to freedom, from pain, from Jason, lies in killing her children. And she is carried off in triumph to the land of Erechtheus in a chariot drawn by winged dragons.

[Hera]

Hera, wife of Zeus, uses less drastic measures to return to that state of freedom, oft equated by modern women as childlessness, by bathing yearly in a magic stream. This stream, called Canathus is near Argos and returns her to her original state of virginity.

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[Phaedra, Jocasta]

Mortal mothers in Greek tragedies, however, with neither the stomach for Medea's ghastly methods, nor the magic of Hera's bathing, usually kill themselves. Phaedra, consumed with passion for her stepson, Hippolytus, tries to starve herself to death, and failing that, accused by Hippolytus of being a curse, a snare, a poisonous weed, she hangs herself from a swinging noose. Jocasta too, fearing the worst long before Oedipus was aware of the truth, hung herself "in a twisted noose of swinging cords."

One may argue that these women chose death to avoid shame and guilt, not to achieve the freedom to create. But the freedom to *be* is as powerful an emotion as the freedom to be creative, and the first freedom must precede the other. These earlier mothers were still prisoners of their biological destiny. And yet, when we take comfort in that fact, we think of the example of Sylvia Plath. In a letter to her mother written in 1960, she writes: "I really hunger for a study of my own out of hearing of the nursery where I could be alone with my thoughts for a few hours a day. I really believe I could do some good stories if I had a stretch of time without distractions."

Distractions. They are the tools with which mothers ply their trade, and motherhood is my profession while my children are so young. But Tillie Olsen warns that it will only breed more "distraction, not meditation . . . Interruption, not continuity; spasmodic, not constant toil" which is vital to the achievement of any art form. She warns that creativity will atrophy, cease to be; opportunities, ideas will be lost forever; gives multitudinous examples of periods of silences. I am afraid. My emotions refuse to accept what my mind hesitates to contemplate. The facts. The facts are in.

[Athena]

Creative gods. Let's think. Mothers if possible. With a shock I realize there are none. The two most creative gods, Athena and Hephaestos, are also the product of "virgin" births. And Athena, of course, often called "Pallas" Athena, meaning the Maiden, was the eternal virgin, the daughter every man wanted. Once, in a fit of womb-envy, Zeus had produced her from his forehead. Not to be outdone, Hera, his wife, conceived Hephaestos on her own. Unfortunately, he was born lame, and she pushed him over the edge of Olympus. Hephaestos, however, became the master craftsman, the god of fire who worked with metal and made jewelry and weapons for war; he built the houses the gods lived in and adorned them with beautiful things he had made. He even created the first robots, in feminine form we read without surprise, who aid him when he walks.

Athena, however, outdoes him in the number of skills with which she is endowed. She is credited with the invention of the rake and the plough (to rape the mother-earth?); she shows man how to yoke cattle and bridle horses; she teaches him the secrets of shipbuilding, pottery and weaving. (She was so proud of her needlework that she turned Arachne, an expert weaver who challenged her work, into a spider so that she could spin forever.)

It is the childless Athena too, the male-begotten child, who

overturns the old goddesses in the *Eumenides* into weaker female forms. Bachofen sees this play as symbolizing the turning point between the old (matriarchy) and the new (patriarchy). Modern scholarship has thrown doubt on the historical accuracy of his hypothesis. But Joseph Campbell has pointed out the unique and valuable insight Bachofen gives into a period in man's growth, into the psychological understanding of our "entire cultural heritage."

The Eumenides are the old Furies, who extract blood for blood and are out for revenge against Orestes for the murder of his mother, Clytemnestra. Orestes is on trial and Apollo and Athena are called in to judge Orestes's guilt. Orestes asks the Furies why they did not chase his mother for revenge after she killed his father. The Furies answer, because she was not a blood relation of the man she slew:

ORESTES: Do you call *me* related by blood to my mother?

CHORUS: Why, in what other way did she nurse you, you miscreant, within her girdle? Do you disown the dearest blood of a mother?

And then Apollo gives his ridiculous argument, that

> the bearer of the so-called offspring is not the mother of it, but only the nurse of the newly-conceived fetus. It is the male who is the author of its being; while she, as a stranger for a stranger, preserves the young plant for those whom the god has not blighted it in the bud.

Athena is then produced as proof that one can become a father without a mother. She wholeheartedly supports the male cause, a perfect child-woman till the end. "I shall give this ballot to Orestes; for there is no mother who gave me birth, and I approve of the male side—except that I do not marry—in all respects with my whole heart, and am entirely in favor of the father's cause."

And the chorus is overcome by this logic; "Grant that our lovely young maidens may have wedded lives . . . at every time exercising due weight in their dealings with men, everywhere the most honored of the gods."

And they are led, happily chanting behind victorious Athena who shouts:

> Forward! Let the light of the torches also proceed, in order that these friendly dwellers in the land may become noted hereafter for the prosperous fortunes of the male inhabitants.

I AM afraid. I am afraid of modern-day Athenas. They are seducing us with their torches and their songs. We dance like mice behind our new Pied Pipers, determined to turn us

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into female forms of eunuchs. Instead of feeling the kicks and bulges of a new human being, they offer us instead empty bellies of guilt, envy and frustration.

The question of creativity is not an either-or one. At last, in this century, we are freed of the bonds of our female bodies. We are free to choose—both. Motherhood and creativity. What is any art-form anyway but an attempt to concretely express an experienced or imagined emotion? Motherhood is all emotion, grist for the mill. Blue daytime soaps for housewives to weep over, or Tannhauser at the Met, or college courses on mythology read in summer gardens.

God, I wish I could convince myself, lay waste this cold question which won't leave me alone. Have I given up my best work for them? Is that all there is? Do my childless-sisters and disgruntled mother-friends have truth on their side? No. No. No. Listen to my heart. Shut my ears. Do what I want to do. What is that? Who knows for certain any more?

Warily I watch my own grey-eyed Athena as she runs in from the garden. The boys follow her excitedly. They have found a bird. She holds it in her cupped hand, it is small and featherless. Its beak is too large for its head to support. Ants are crawling round its blue, thinskinned eyelids. We place it in a box and shine a goose-necked lamp on it. It is time to gather and eat. The candle is lit. Outside, the cicadas have begun and the darkness has descended. "Oh Earth. . . . What pang is this that enters my side? Hear the cause of my wrath, mother Night! Dispossessed of my ancient honors, the baffling wiles of these gods have made me of no account." Round our table it is warm. Now and then we hear the bird chirping as it struggles to survive.

Television

WAKE UP, AMERICA!

WHERE ARE YOU, J. FRED MUGGS?

THERE WAS a meeting of the minds not long ago, of the sort that only television can offer: Margaret Trudeau versus Jane Pauley, two rounds, split decision. When I say split decision I mean that it is difficult to say who came out on top (or bottom) because both came away looking and feeling triumphant. Margaret, for having walked off the set in a righteous huff, and Jane, for having wielded the razor with those piercing questions.

In fact, they both had every reason to be happy, for both, having entered the contest for separate reasons, felt that they had done what they set out to do. Jane, because she plays the role of a tough, no-nonsense broadcast journalist, and Margaret, because she protects her privacy at all costs, except in those instances when exposure may be profitable. Both met on fertile turf for their points of view, for this was early morning television.

Of course, Margaret must realize that there isn't much interest in her except for her answers to personal questions, and Jane continues to believe that journalism is in fact the sort of thing she does, a Junior League version of Barbara Walters, wringing the truth out of the likes of Cher, or George Burns. But that is the genius of television, really, where the facts fit the fantasy, where Jane Pauley can play at being a reporter, and where a great deal can be made of nothing at all. Margaret Trudeau and her problems were to be seen on half a dozen shows; how many newspaper stories could she possibly sustain?

I confess that I almost never see early morning television, but I have been traveling a lot lately, and one finds oneself shaving in a lonely motel and yearning for noise. Noise is exactly what the *Today Show* (NBC) and its imitators provide.

It is nearly forgotten now that in the early days an important member of the *Today Show* team was a chimpanzee named J. Fred Muggs. He was, in retrospect, as integral a part of the staff as Dave Garroway, or Jack Lescoulie, or Frank Blair. The void that he left, however, has been more than filled. The *Today Show* has always proved that the human equivalents of chimpanzees can fill up the air with patter for an hour or two.

And what patter it is! The *Today Show* is very impressed with itself nowadays, as well it ought to be. The comings and goings of its various hosts and hostesses are covered in the press with a kind of deferential awe. Hedda Hopper would have known what to do with on-the-air tension between Barbara Walters and the late Frank McGee.

But our standards are different nowadays, and what may have been thought trivial in the past is a deadly serious game today. When Frank McGee died there was trouble finding a suitable replacement for him. That elusive ingredient, chemistry, could not so easily be found in the series of eager aspirants paired with Barbara Walters for a week's audition. At long last the successor was found, and it turned out to be a blow-dried anchorman named Jim Hartz, who lasted for awhile and then returned to his spiritual home, the local news beat, in Washington, D.C.

The problem, it turned out, was finding a serious broadcast journalist who was willing to do commercials as well as talk. This is the sort of bogus professionalism anchormen delight in practicing; they are a pure product of show business, and yet their pride demands that they carry on about the indignity of selling dog food. They are right to insist that it may be undignified, but they started down the path to the Alpo can long before they think they did.

The upshot of all this is the current *Today Show,* which consists of three hosts and a news reader. All the elements of contemporary living are covered, and all the ingredients of motivational research and interior design have been thrown together to create an entertainment product for the '70s. The news is fresh, the features are geared to the young and the affluent, the interviews are expansions of *People* magazine.

Tom Brokaw combines banality with a portentous voice, and is therefore the conscience of the program. He will sometimes gently correct his colleagues, and often turn out to be

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wrong. Gene Shalit, a wild-looking man with electric hair and a walrus moustache, specializes in cultural affairs, which usually means show biz conversation and 60-second movie reviews. Jane Pauley giggles a lot; at first, I thought it was nervousness, but it seems to be habitual, and is intended, I suppose, to distinguish her in some way from her illustrious predecessor. Feminism, inevitably, has become her stock in trade, and she will frequently assume the mantle of Woman in interesting ways: 'we' discovered radium, 'we' got the vote in 1920.

And yet, it is not all working according to the plan. The *Today Show* may have grown into an institution too fast, or may have crept self-consciously out of its appropriate realm of entertainment. *Good Morning, America* (ABC), which is infinitely more bland, is beginning to loom in its shadow. I have never been able to look at *Good Morning, America* for more than a few minutes: it is so excruciatingly amiable and simple-minded that I find myself embarrassed on its behalf. Its master of ceremonies, David Hartman, moves back and forth easily between SALT II and Rona Barrett, and doesn't notice the difference. His Muzak-like voice is obviously the sort of instrument to lull Americans awake. On the *Today Show,* life is real and life is earnest, and it is sending people away from the television set.

Whatever the happy medium may be, it is not on the air. CBS has tried innumerable hard-news formats, including the now-legendary tenure of Sally Quinn in 1973-74, paired with a hapless Hugh Rudd. None of them has worked, and none, I venture to say, ever will. The *Today Show* is moving by tortured phases in that direction, and the success of *Good Morning, America* implies that the public doesn't want it from NBC either.

What sleepy viewers probably want is what NBC gave them a quarter century ago, and has self-consciously rejected. The *Today Show* was once a casual, offbeat amalgam of news, weather and chatter. It fit in well at the breakfast table. New Yorkers used to press their noses against the studio window and look in at a friendly acquaintance. Today I doubt if there are any windows in the studio, and no wonder.

PHILIP TERZIAN

Screen

MUPPETS GO HOLLYWOOD

TRES DRAMATIQUE

I NOTICED that at the theater in Manhattan where *The Muppet Movie* is playing, tickets are $4.50 for adults and $2.00 for kids. If prices were the other way round, everybody might come closer to getting his money's worth. The wonderful thing about *The Muppet Show* on television is that it really is that most elusive of all mass-media phenomena: fun for the whole family. The networks have tried for years to create family entertainment by decree. (Remember the prime-time "Family Hour" of a few years ago—a disaster both aesthetic and financial for the network that tried it.) But to the surprise of no one except a few executives, what the networks were after turned out to be a matter of imagination, not policy. Jim Henson and his Muppets proved that. In Hollywood, however, where attempts to revive family fare have done even worse than on television, they still don't believe in The Muppets. The current wisdom in Hollywood is specialty movies—*Walking Tall* for the drive-ins in the South, Woody Allen for urban centers on the east and west coasts, etc.—and the Muppets have been approached as a problem in this sort of specialty marketing.

Summer is of course the time when Mom and Dad need some movies to take the kids to. But to Hollywood's way of thinking, this is no longer a situation calling for a family picture. It only requires a picture adolescent enough to please the youngest conceivable customer. If you attract not only the kids, but the little kiddies as well, you've got Mom and Dad as a captive audience. Since the kiddies can't go unless accompanied by an adult. Even if Mom and Dad are bored by the film they'll probably be grateful for having had something to do with the children, which is the most that Hollywood in its cynicism can hope for. This is the strategy that was developed last year for *Grease*. The raunchy nostalgia of the Broadway original was turned into a kind of pre-teen soap opera, a bubble bath for Travolta and Olivia Newton-John to splash around in. In *The Muppet Movie* the original *Muppet Show* from TV, which has been genuine fun for everyone, gets a similar Hollywood treatment.

Maybe I shouldn't blame Hollywood, though. A current Hollywood success formula may be used to exploit the Muppets here, but I'm not sure it's what makes the movie fail. Perhaps the problems were just inherent in the whole idea of basing a movie on Henson's television series. Like all sit-coms, *The Muppet Show* depends upon a lot of givens. The situation itself is a given in the form of a variety theater where the show never quite goes on. And the personalities of all the characters—Kermit, Miss Piggy, Scooter, Dr. Teeth, Fozzie Bear, Waldorf and Statler up in their box—are all given too. Since a sit-com series, being open-ended, can never build up to a climax, all crises are inevitably trivial and all human nature inalterable. A performer's character is established in one or two appearances and never develops further. This simplicity is what gives sit-coms their mass appeal. It clarifies the hopelessly complicated, comedy-of-errors plot, rendering it harmless and thereby leaving it free to be funny.

But in a movie it's almost impossible to bump along ceaselessly in the same way. In *The Muppet Movie* Henson and his collaborators try to develop the characters of Kermit and Miss Piggy, making them expand to fill a longer, less certain plot, with the result that they both lose a lot of the personality they have on television. On the television program Kermit is too harried and his problems too transient to have any meaning. Life is just a frantic routine which leaves no time, or

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need, to reflect. Like sit-com characters, the funniest cartoon heroes from Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse to the Road Runner have always lived the same sort of existence. But in *The Muppet Movie* Kermit starts out with illusions—that going to Hollywood, for instance, will enable him to give people happiness—which then necessitate some moments of self-doubt later on.

Moreover, Kermit and Miss Piggy become embroiled in a boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl plot which requires her to be quite tender at times and him to be quite broken up when she momentarily walks out on him. This is all terribly out of character for them both. Sit-com regulars, cartoon heroes, puppets and Muppets alike are funny to both children and adults because they are caricatures of everyday life—of the least common denominators of human experience which children and adults all share. They make us laugh at the day-to-day aggravation which we inflict on each other, and which children, in whose little world such aggravations loom large, need to laugh at even more than adults. But in their movie Kermit and Piggy are straining for something more, a relationship that is, as Piggy herself would put it, "*très dramatique*." The two of them, I'm afraid, have gone Hollywood.

Problems of characterization occur in many of the film's cameo roles, too, as short as they are. Mel Brooks is funny as a mad German scientist trying to electrocute Miss Piggy and Kermit, for example, but Steve Martin seems to make no sense as a surly waiter in lederhosen. A vignette like this has to be very sharply drawn to be funny, but many of these just try to be wacky by being incoherent. Again, one gets the feeling that Henson has overextended his power of invention. The first five minutes of *The Muppet Movie*, where everyone in the troupe cuts up in a screening room waiting for a preview of their film to begin, makes us think that the film is going to be just as quick and funny as the TV show. But as soon as the plot itself begins, the momentum is lost and the pace so crucial to the television series is never regained. It's a shame that Henson felt compelled to make a movie at all, really. We're so used to putting down TV as an inferior art form that nearly everyone in the medium, no matter how successful there, seems to want to break into movies. But the truth is that *The Muppet Show* is so good on TV and so much at home there, it has inevitably suffered by translation to the screen.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

Correction: A sentence was inadvertently dropped from the August 3 review of Wood Allen's *Manhattan*. Colin Westerbeck's description of the film's opening monologue, in which the hero is starting on a novel, should have been printed as:

"Chapter One," he says, ". . . He romanticized New York all out of proportion. . . ." But the voice stops, apparently dissatisfied, and begins all over, "Chapter One . . . He was *too* romantic about Manhattan. . . ." But again he breaks off, rebuking himself, "No, no . . . too corny . . . got to be more profound."

Dance

THE MALE PRINCIPAL

SOMETHING IS SPECIAL IN DENMARK

AUGUST BOURNONVILLE, the greatest teacher and choreographer of the Danish school, was born in Copenhagen August 21, 1805 and died there November 30, 1879. This autumn the Royal Danish Ballet will present a festival commemorating the death of Bournonville at the Royal Theater in Copenhagen, and this summer's American tour of selected soloists is an hors d'oeuvre to that occasion.

Bournonville is to Danish ballet, what Petipa was to the Imperial Ballet based in St. Petersburg. As a point of history he fed directly into the development of the Russian school through Christian Johansson, who was his pupil and became the chief pedagogue of the Maryinsky Ballet School.

As a young man, Bournonville, learned everything his ballet master father could teach him and then went to the center of the ballet world, Paris, to pursue further study. His arrival coincided with the rise of the Romantic ballet, and he partnered Marie Taglioni, the supreme exemplar of the movement. His own technical skill was exceptional; and when he returned to Denmark, to assume the duties of ballet master, he tended to stress the development of the male dancer, since he continued to perform for several years before devoting himself completely to teaching and choreography. He created a set of exercises, one for each of the six working days of the week, which today are the basis for instruction in the Royal School. During their visit the Danish dancers performed a short ballet, "Bournonville Etudes," based on a sampler from all the regular classes. The feathery, light, beating movements of the legs and feet, the boxy, squared look of the torso and the slightly abandoned flight of the body in leaps to the right or left were all very much in evidence, as they were during Bournonville's own time. The company's traditions maintain a link to the early 19th century that carries us back to one of the turning points of ballet history.

When Bournonville returned to Copenhagen from Paris, point work for women had only begun to be seen regularly on stage. This ability to rise to the tips of the toes was perfected by women and allows them to achieve an air of aethereality and remoteness. The effect became a central concern to the choreographers of the Romantic era, and the domination of ballet by the ballerina had begun. Prior to this time, the male had clearly been the most important figure on stage because he was free to make more acrobatic and spectacular movements, unhampered by the heels and clumsy costumes that women were obliged to wear. The Romantic ballet produced the dominance of the ballerina in France and throughout Europe and Russia; it did not, however, change things as radically in

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Denmark. Bournonville's own interest in performing saw to that, and to this day the Royal Danish School continues to turn out world-class male dancers more frequently than comparably celebrated ballerinas.

Among the soloists seen during the Royal Danish's season, were Niels Kehlet, Peter Martins, Adam Lüders and Peter Schaufuss, of whom only Kehlet has made his career solely within the Royal Danish company. Martins and Lüders are principal dancers with the New York City Ballet and Schaufuss is a principal with the National Ballet of Canada. All appeared effectively in the programs of short ballets or extracts from longer Bournonville works.

Lise Stripp is one of the younger female members of the company but her easy, almost laconic, grace was exceptionally impressive in "Polka Militaire" as well as other ballets. Along with Linda Hinberg, Annamaria Dybdal and Eva Kloborg, she showed a confident feel for the special restrained Bournonville style, which has always preserved a demure look for the women, even in the most exhuberant and dazzling moments.

The fleetfooted character of this style is achieved by an exceptional emphasis on quickness and the staccato succession of several small steps in place of one large one. The Bournonville dancer skims the surface of the stage and presents an open, welcoming curvature of the arms toward the audience. It is a style that is infused with lightness and has a sunshine quality seeming to signal a permanent celebration.

The practice of symphonic writing for ballet music was not generally followed in Bournonville's prime, and so his ballets are essentially collections of individual dances without the broad integrated line that characterizes ballets done to such unified scores. In the programs of excerpts and shorter pieces that were shown, there was a certain scrappiness about the succesion of individual dances. However, without mounting entire ballets, which would have required a considerably larger company than the fourteen dancers who comprised the soloist group, there was no other choice. What the programs lost in esthetic quality was more than made up by the opportunity to experience this unique style and this unbroken tradition.

Considering the decline and fall of ballet fortunes in France and Italy, the lands which had originally given the form its impetus and grace, the Royal Danish Ballet is remarkably vigorous. It began as the private property of the king—part of the ballet master's duties was to teach social dancing to the royal family. Today it is supported handsomely by the government, but the royal family still retains a special interest in it.

The ballet tradition has flourished and been continuously nurtured in what is one of Europe's smaller nations. With its five million population Denmark is about a fiftieth the size of the Soviet Union and produces about as many world-class dancers. The school ordinarily has a complement of eighty students in all its sections and even more remarkably does not have any boarding facilities. This means, in effect, that practically everyone is a student from Copenhagen or nearby suburbs. To maintain the quality and standards that have been preserved indicates a special sympathy and talent for the art unmatched on such a scale, indeed almost on any scale.

DON McDONAGH

Books: CONCLAVES & CAUCUSES

THE MAKING OF THE POPES 1978:
THE POLITICS OF INTRIGUE IN THE VATICAN

Andrew M. Greeley
Andrews and McMeel, $12.95, 346 pp.

THE YEAR OF THREE POPES

Peter Hebblethwaite
Collins, $8.95, 220 pp.

Richard P. McBrien

NEITHER OF these books is destined to become a standard reference on the modern papacy or even on papal elections. That book remains to be written. Both make interesting reading nonetheless, and they can be recommended on that basis alone. In a world where dullness, banality and the predictable are as plentiful as oil seems to be scarce, it is always a pleasure to pick up a book that one can read almost effortlessly from start to finish. Peter Hebblethwaite, the new Rome correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter* and former editor of the English Jesuit periodical *The Month*, and Andrew Greeley, sociologist at the University of Arizona and priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, have given us such works.

Their books are more similar than dissimilar. Neither discusses the recent papal elections in terms of the mystery and excitement of the conclaves alone. Both adopt a slightly larger view. They take the measure of the pontificate of Paul VI and try to extrapolate from the character and career of Pope John Paul II to the kind of church he will be shepherding, in all likelihood, for much that is left of this century.

I shall not dwell here on the obvious discrepancies in vote counts and in their reports of behind-the-scenes maneuvering. I leave that to someone else with the time and interest in pointing these out: Cardinal Siri's exact support and on which ballots, the relative strength (or weakness) of the North European bishops and of Cardinal Suenens in particular, the readiness of the second conclave to elect Milan's Cardinal Colombo and his refusal to accept because of age, the true author(s) of Pope John Paul I's inaugural address the morning after his own election, and so forth.

The major difference between the two books are their evaluation of Pope Paul VI and, to a much lesser extent, their ecclesiologies. Hebblethwaite is clearly more favorable to the late pope than is Greeley. Wisely, he recalls Paul VI's

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close association with Pope Pius XII (whom he otherwise resembled in so many ways that people often caught themselves referring to him as "Pius" VI). It was an ambivalent relationship at best. Paul, then Archbishop Montini, was "exiled" to Milan only to be "rehabilitated" by Pope John XXIII in 1958. When he himself became pope, he was determined not to repeat the mistakes of his former patron. He spoke out vehemently and unequivocally against injustice (no *Deputy* would be written about his silence in the face of genocide), and he remained always accessible to church leaders and to the people alike. His commitment to collegiality, liturgical reform and ecumenism was intellectually genuine, but it was marred by "inconsistent practice." "In the end," Hebblethwaite soberly concludes, "the Petrine principle of conservation came to prevail." For many, the Pauline spirit had been "overlaid with paralysing caution."

By and large, Hebblethwaite's assessment of Paul VI is at once judicious and realistic. The only glaring lapse is his suggestion that Paul VI's stand on artificial birth control, the ordination of women and obligatory celibacy was a matter of minor significance. It is not correct that these issues represented a "superficial way of judging the pontificate." All three go to the heart of the meaning of human existence because all three have to do directly with our understanding of sexuality and its place in defining and shaping the human.

Greeley, on the other hand, is negative about Paul VI. He refers to the "failure of nerve at the top" (p. 17), his promulgation of "obsessive-compulsive rules" for the election of his successor (p. 25), his weakness, hand-wringing, and "whining" (p. 36), his "utter failure" as bishop of Rome (p. 39), his lack of ability to "make his reforms stick," his appointment of "colorless administrators" (p. 98), the loss of credibility (p. 99), his vacillation and, finally, stubbornness over *Humanae vitae* (p. 100).

Hebblethwaite's view on Paul VI is the more balanced and, therefore, the more likely to stand the test of history. So, too, is his ecclesiological perspective.

No theological material in Greeley's book, for example, can compare with the "Theological Appendix" in Hebblethwaite's. Hebblethwaite displays, despite the great disparity in productivity, the greater sureness of theological judgment. Greeley's theological views on the papacy are surprisingly weak. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that so serious a scholar as he would have written that it "may not be all that important what the papal powers are or how they are defined. What counts is the person who is pope and the way he radiates goodness" (p. 236). This has got to be theologically the worst statement in either book. Vying for that honor, however, are Greeley's earlier, unnuanced references to Jesus as the "Founder" of the institutional Church (p. 9, and again on p. 36). And yet he also give us some outstanding passages on the challenges and opportunities facing the new pope in his open letter to John Paul II (pp. 248-250), the best part of the whole book.

Both volumes share certain deficiencies in common. Each is distractingly provincial. Hebblethwaite is constantly quoting Cardinal Hume, as if he were the only source of ecclesiastical wisdom, and Greeley is preoccupied, to say the least, about Cardinal Cody, who is mentioned on at least seventeen different pages. Whatever His Eminence's merits or failings, he doesn't deserve that much attention in a book which purports to deal with the historically momentous.

Give Greeley the edge, however, on honesty. He at least admits some of his mistakes in judgment (those he doesn't admit, if there are any, we wouldn't know in any case); Hebblethwaite admits no error. And yet he made some, and they are public: his prediction that Cardinal Bertoli would win the August election on the seventh ballot; that Cardinal Hume would get at least fifteen votes; and his criticism of the critics of Cardinal Benelli without acknowledging that he was himself the author of an extended two-part critique of then-Archbishop Benelli in the London *Observer* several years ago.

Furthermore, Greeley's provincialism is more above-board than Hebblethwaite's, whose anti-Americanism emerges always in the form of gratuitous "digs": against the U.S. Catholic public's varied reaction to *Humanae vitae* and *Populorum Progressio* (pp. 49-50), Andrew Young (p. 119), *Commonweal* and its view from Madison Avenue (pp. 120-1), Cardinal Cooke (p. 49), the Committee for the Responsible Election of the Pope (pp. 44 ff.), and Father Greeley himself, whom the author describes as "pacing the streets of Rome, muttering into his pocket tape-recorder and complaining that the Italians did not understand the sociological approach" (p. 50).

There is also a curious naiveté about Hebblethwaite's book. "To avoid all misunderstanding," he writes, "I should add that ecclesiastical ambition differs from secular ambition: if a churchman wants promotion, the motive is not personal self-aggrandizemen—it would be folly to seek high office for its own sake—but so that he can work for the good of the church as he conceives it."

Pax Christi

For those who wish to respond to the advertisement of Pax Christi in the August 3, 1979 issue of *Commonweal* criticizing SALT II and proposing a Campaign to Help Stop New Weapons:

- ☐ I authorize my name in support of the Pax Christi Campaign to Help Stop New Weapons.
- ☐ I wish to join Pax Christi.
- ☐ Enclosed is $_____ to support Pax Christi's peace education work.
- ☐ Please send me _____ copies of this petition so that I can promote the campaign.

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Close behind are suggestions that Pope John Paul I wrote his inaugural address from scratch the night he was elected, and Hebblethwaite's generally uncritical embrace of Pope John Paul II in spite of his own warning, issued at the top of Chapter 14, that "When a man becomes pope, a process of mythologization starts which it is difficult to resist." And Hebblethwaite doesn't.

For that matter, neither does Greeley. Indeed, his comments about the third of the year's popes are almost embarrassing in their praise. The pope's first six weeks on the job were "flawless" (p. 234); he is an "absolute genius" (p. 236) and "the most gifted pope we've ever had" (p. 248). This judgment, Greeley insists, is "irrefutable." But he is too much the social scientist not to hedge his bets. He worries about the pope's eventual decisions concerning sexual ethics and his eventual handling of dispensations from clerical celibacy. But it seems he worries most about Cardinal Cody's being allowed to remain as Archbishop of Chicago!

If these books prove nothing else, it is that events are always filtered through the consciousness, experiences, and even prejudices of their observers. This is not a problem peculiar to Peter Hebblethwaite or Andrew Greeley. It is the common lot of us all. All the more reason to praise those who can sufficiently transcend these limitations and produce something of quality. Both men have done so.

All sic et non

DECADENCE:
THE STRANGE LIFE OF AN EPITHET

Richard Gilman

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $8.95, 180 pp.

Arthur A. Cohen

RICHARD GILMAN'S elegant and vigorous essay on *Decadence* is difficult to situate in the spectrum of American intellectual undertaking. It is so much more appropriate to the French tradition of inquiry where distinguished litterateurs parse and examine a single notion, spinning out its implications, and consequences. A pre-war tradition common to the essayists that Jacques Riviere (himself an eminent practitioner) favored for *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Not less Germany, where Max Scheler, Ernst Cassirer, Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel, among others, were taking a variety of obdurate cultural phenomena and putting them under the glass of inspection.

Scheler's essay on *ressentiment* is not much longer than Gilman's inquiry. Methodologically how different nonetheless; and, even more significant, how vast the chasm between the implications Scheler would pin and those Gilman risks to discern. It is the difference between using the single reality as a refraction of the whole of culture and the more pragmatic undertaking of employing the metaphor of decadence as it is given, examining its possible meanings, sketching the history of its usage, and finally, at the end, exhausted and annoyed with the deceit of its popular marketing, giving way to a peroration of disgust with the whole business.

Decadence is, of course, an epithet as Gilman concludes. Its history is surely vulgar and intemperate, the cry of conservatives bent on philistine rejection of novelty and experiment, or the avant-garde's self-congratulation on having supplied itself with the *frisson* of alienage and emplaced a raspberry on the jaw of bourgeois smugness. All true. And its pre-modern career, brilliantly highlighted in Gilman's opening chapters, makes clear how the ages after antiquity employed decadence to signalize the falling away from the excellence and nobility of ancient patrimony, both pagan and Biblical (although not both at once and certainly not by the same critics). All the metaphors of debased cultures, ages of the world, cultural youth and senescence, the descent of gold to the metallic dross of what follows, the mythology of partriarchs depend upon the rhetoric of decadence.

Civilizations wane, all is a downward spiral (if one is forbearing with decline) or a linear plunge (if one is impatient for apocalypse). Clearly decadence suggests something about human longing and dissatisfaction, models sought and models forsaken. It reasserts in perversity the claim of hope, masked by the posturings of journalistic hue and cry, for decadence is somehow linked with cultural acedia, an ennui before the storm, a lassitude awaiting something (the fad or fashion) or someone (guru, politician, Messiah) to get civilization off its becalming dead center.

The only element, then, which I found lacking in Richard Gilman's otherwise arresting essay is a commanding point of view. Historical perspective is full and rich, sources are abundant, discussion of literary *tendenz* exacting, asides and glosses frequently suggestive; but all these excellences fail, somehow, to compel me to rethink. In fact, Gilman's concluding judgment that decadence is now employed as brickbat, shibboleth, rhetorical device, emptied of relevant meaning, never having had a settled domain to begin with, leaves me dissatisfied. I, at least, require something more, not necessarily a longer book, but something more.

For readers of *Commonweal* it is especially fitting to recall that Gilman once—on appropriate occasions—dipped into the quiver of Catholic thought and selected a toxic shaft or two when he reviewed drama in these pages some years ago. Catholicism supplied a relevant, if not always useful, armamentarium of organizing principle which might allow one to devastate a cultural pretension. Not less myself—equally, on occasion—have been known to summon up my own ancient doctrine to serve as precedent for contemporary criticism. Clearly, if one reads Gilman's text carefully, one can detect a hankering for the architectonic source of judgment, a not infrequent employment of Augustinian category to set the record straight, a persistent reference to Catholic intellectual tradition as both friend and foe of his argument.

What is to the point about this observation is not to recall a tradition traduced or ignored, since this comment has no per-

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sonal vector at all. Outspoken and explicit Catholicism (or Jewish teachings about manners and morals) is not going to advance the discussion of decadence (quite the contrary, it might impede it). But it does propose that an organizing vision is critical to the phenomenological investigation of culture, whether religious, humanist, philosophical is beside the point.

Decadence or boredom or Dada (as modalities of self-judgment) are also phenomena of cultural interaction. They are constellating conceptions; they cluster and conduct energies that reach them from the whole array of moral and cultural enactment. Whole ages and civilizations may be thought decadent or bored; single souls may be similarly afflicted. What matters is that these terms, more than simply provocative or descriptive, are accusatory and judging. They are moral discernments in ages that no longer dare speak of morality. The rhetoric of decadence is the refuge of abashed moral discourse. (In this context, Gilman would have been better served by Nietzsche's *Geneology of Morals* than his more hortatory *Will to Power*, for decadence is the charge of the man of resentment.) What is needed then is a frame of theory that allows the critic to discriminate not only effects and product, but the spirit and creation as well.

To examine *without* visionary scheme, the argument must be passionately dialetical, all *sic et non*, pitting usages against each other in the effort to identify the precipitate that remains after withering stares have turned the opponents to ash. The dialectic compels precision and care; its results are at least usable conceptions. This is the way Scheler worked in his essay on *ressentiment*, obliging the analysis to construct and destroy, to project and demolish, until what remains is a version of the man of ontic envy. Where the vision obtains, however, the cultural dissection is not rendered necessarily subjective and unscientific, but rather the terms of the argument are morally encoded *ab initio*.

Teilhard de Chardin's essay on decadence (had he written one) would have centered on the church's opposition to his transformational evolutionism. It would have (this imaginary essay) investigated the hollow show of ecclesiastical panoply and excess (which many of the true proponents of decadence found among the church's principal appeals) and, having done this turn of criticism and disgust, would have proposed a theology of hope. It would never have been as witty, adept and deliciously vicious as Gilman's essay on *Decadence* and it would have been *parti pris*, but I would have gnawed the bone longer.

The course of sexual mores

SEX LIFE

Bruce Cook

M. Evans, $9.95, 288 pp.

THE MARTINI-HENRY MODIFICATION

Barrie Hughes

Norton, $8.95, 185 pp.

Steven Kroll

BRUCE COOK KNOWS we're all in trouble. He knows the sexual revolution has not made us free, and that people are more confused than gratified. Admirably, his novel, *Sex Life*, tries to deal with that confusion. Less admirable is his rather puritanical approach. On one level, Judith Rossner's *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* was about how casual sex can kill. By the end, *Sex Life* has told us that, and worse.

Mr. Goodbar began with a murder, and then traced back the experience of the victim, Terry Dunn. *Sex Life* spares us the murder itself, and begins with the aftermath. Detective Sergeant Joseph Melaniphy finds two nude corpses on a bed in a seedy room near the Chicago-Evanston border. One is a boy, thirteen or fourteen, who has been strangled. The other is a man around forty. He's been beaten to death.

Melaniphy begins an investigation. Out of a gnawing sense of personal identification, he becomes more interested in the murdered man's nature than in his killer. This allows the reflective, deliberate narrative to go back and explore Jack Gawlor from 1952, his senior year in high school, to the present.

Jack was the son of defeated parents. In high school he was bewildered about sex, explored Chicago strip joints, wanted to be a writer. At college in southern Illinois, he had a bad experience with a black prostitute. In the army in Frankfurt, he had a better, but still frightening, experience with a German prostitute. Back home, his father dead, he married a nice girl he'd known in college to escape his mother. They had two daughters. He began to rise in advertising. But he was restless. The marriage was not sexually exciting. He had an affair with a woman at his office, a new kind of woman who didn't believe in exclusive relationships and thought sex was fun. Whe she left the firm, he became more desperate, had another affair, began seeing prostitutes. His wife went out to work. They were divorced. He began seeing prostitutes exclusively,

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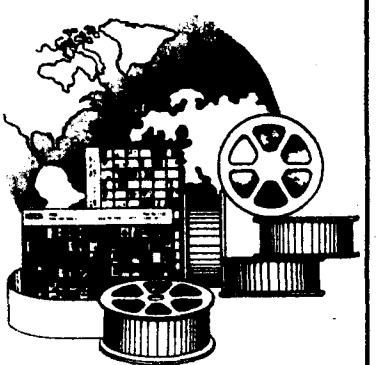

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then, quite by accident, got involved with a transvestite and finally a bisexual scene.

So the slide to oblivion. The tension does build as we get closer to the brutal end, and we know Melaniphy's investigation, which crops up briefly and irrelevantly at the end of each chapter, will be successful. But what is most disturbing is that in the entire novel, Jack Gawlor does not have, and does not pursue, a single real relationship, not even a friendship.

If such a man had been presented as unusual, or as a perplexing example of the uptight nineteen fifties entering the unbuttoned nineteen seventies, there would be no reason to quarrel with his characterization. But with Melaniphy asking ominous questions of himself and Gawlor going predictably through every imaginable kind of sexual experience, clearly the intent is, in the publisher's words, to reflect, "the course of sexual mores in America over the last forty years."

This seems both sad and wrongheaded. We are all struggling with our sexual freedom, but most of us are doing it in terms of the changing nature of relationships. Few of us are totally indifferent to relationships. Even the "new narcissists" are struggling. Even Terry Dunn wanted something more.

In this context, Barrie Hughes's *The Martini-Henry Modification* is about what happens when relationships become so intense they turn into warfare. It's also a novel that, in its portentousness, brings together the themes of sex and power.

When he is not at a Catholic boarding school, David Fairfax lives alone on a barren island off the coast of Australia. On vacation, he's invited two guests to stay: his school friend, Peter Vandeleur, and his teacher, Anthony Carmichael. Peter, oddly changed, has done nothing but shoot snakes and lizards. Now he's about to leave and Tony arrive.

Tony is very fat, very gay, and very much in love. He doesn't care about the ugly island. He wants David. Then Peter reappears, with his peculiar, modified gun. He threatens David and Tony, and sends Tony out into the rainy night to play a variation on "the most dangerous game."

Tony wallows, and is resuced by the local caretaker, Bill Green, an ancient who failed to achieve glory at Gallipoli. Green leads Tony in an attack on Peter and David, but the balance of power keeps shifting in both camps and when the end finally comes, Peter is dead and the moral order restored.

All this is too carefully and too obviously structured, and although the arch formality of the style creates the right amount of distance from the characters, it can also be very annoying. Large questions go unanswered: Why is David allowed on the island alone? Why is Peter crazy? But on the whole, this bleak novel, with its terrible title, lingers in the memory.

Tennis (without a net), anyone?

THE LITTLE LEAGUE GAME

Lewis Yablonsky and Jonathan Brower
Times Books, $10, 211 pp.

Michael Crosby

IN 1946, when I was 10 years old, I bent over to field a ground ball and it hit me in the face. The ball was wrapped in several layers of thick, black bicycle tape, and, because the field was bumpy and grassless, it hit me hard. No one gave me a word of sympathy, not the 14-year-old first baseman, nor the 16-year-old shortstop, nor the third-baseman, who had just gotten out of reform school. They kept on playing. Six hours later, when I began the two-mile walk to my home, carrying on my shoulder the bat and glove I had bought with money earned selling two-cent newspapers in the street, my face was still hurting.

Because I can still feel that sticky, overweight ball hitting me in the face, I find reports of the cruel and unusual punishment of little league players a bit hard to stomach. According to *The Little League Game* by Lewis Yablonsky and Jonathan Brower the life of the contemporary 10-year-old baseball player is an unending series of indignities and cruelties, which in some cases lead to permanent and serious injuries to arms, backs, ankles and psyches. The unfortunate little leaguer is continually pressed by the parents who drive him to and from the ballfield, by the doctors who are in constant attendance, by coaches and managers, to brutalize himself, or herself, in the cause of winning. The coaches, who are "macho" or "authoritarian," relentlessly force players to subordinate themselves to the interests of the team, to hustle and play heads up baseball, to swing only at strikes and to remain quiet when they notice that an umpire has made a mistake in their favor. Among the coaches' other crimes are scouting the opposition in advance, attempting to pick the best players in the draft, and, in one appalling instance, asking a player to walk a mile-and-a-half when transportation was not available.

There is undoubtedly much that is wrong with the little leagues of America. Many coaches are boorish, crude, frustrated and unversed in the fundamentals of the game, and many have ruined fine young pitching arms with overwork. But what Yablonsky and Brower fail to see is that playing to win and having fun are not mutually exclusive and that playing within a set of rules is more fun than anarchy. Robert Frost once said that writing free verse was like playing tennis without a net. The Yablonsky-Brower version of an ideal little league would make tennis without a net look like martial law. In baseball's answer to Summerhill all players would come to the plate whether they could hit or not, and no one would be a substitute. Hitters would swing at any pitch they wanted to, team play would give way to the cult of the individual, and failure would receive the same rewards as success.

This is not baseball. This is giving water wings to the swimmer or an electric motor to the bicyclist. It is building an elevator to the top of Mount Everest, and it is to baseball what Ed Wynn's home golf course was to a real golf course. On Wynn's course every stroke resulted in a hole-in-one.

No, the little leagues are not a Gulag

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Archipelago for pin-striped toddlers, and, in fact, to some of us who played the game with cracked bats, taped balls and paper thin gloves on stony fields with the center fielder in one game backed up against the pitcher in another, they seem like paradise.

There is a case to be made against little league, but Yablonsky and Brower are not the ones to make it. They have little understanding of how or why people play baseball. "Hustle," they tell us, "is important to the coach, but not usually to the player." What little insight they have is buried beneath thick layers of sociological jargon. "Passive acceptance by the group of the frustration of authoritarian leadership was found in some cases to mean a non-frustrated acceptance of dependent relationship, and in other cases to mean a frustrated hopelessness in the face of overwhelming power," is a sentence that should not appear in print anywhere, let alone in a book about what is, after all, a game.

In brief

WOMANPRIEST: A PERSONAL ODYSSEY, *by* ALLA BOZARTH CAMPBELL. *Paulist Press, $9.95, 229 pp.*

Russian Orthodox chrismation and spirituality from her mother, Episcopal church life from her father, and, eventually, ordination as priest: the barest description of the roots and flowerings of Alla Bozarth-Campbell's life thus far. The bones are given flesh, recorded and reflected upon in this work of autobiography, current church history, feminist argument and, occasionally, poetry. What justifies an autobiographical account from a 31-year-old woman, even so remarkable a person as the author—poet, priest, counselor, artist, Ph.D.—is her role in the women's movement in the Episcopal church and, specifically, her ordination in Philadelphia in July 1974 along with ten other women.

Her account of the events before and after those momentous ordinations is a fascinating document in the growing dossier of the confrontation of feminism and the churches. Much of the personal material is equally interesting as the self-portrait of one woman's hearing and living of the call to priesthood. The poems scattered throughout the book are in many ways its highlights: funny, wry—even breathtaking, theology fused to its best form, poetry and prayer—as "Talitha, Cumi" or "Bakerwoman God."

What, then, is the difficulty I have with *Womanpriest*? Perhaps there's something precocious or premature in the autobiographical aspect of the book. Perhaps, too, there's a spirituality that I'm out of sympathy with, particularly in its vague conception of priesthood as free-floating sacramental agency. And maybe also the mix of styles and pur-

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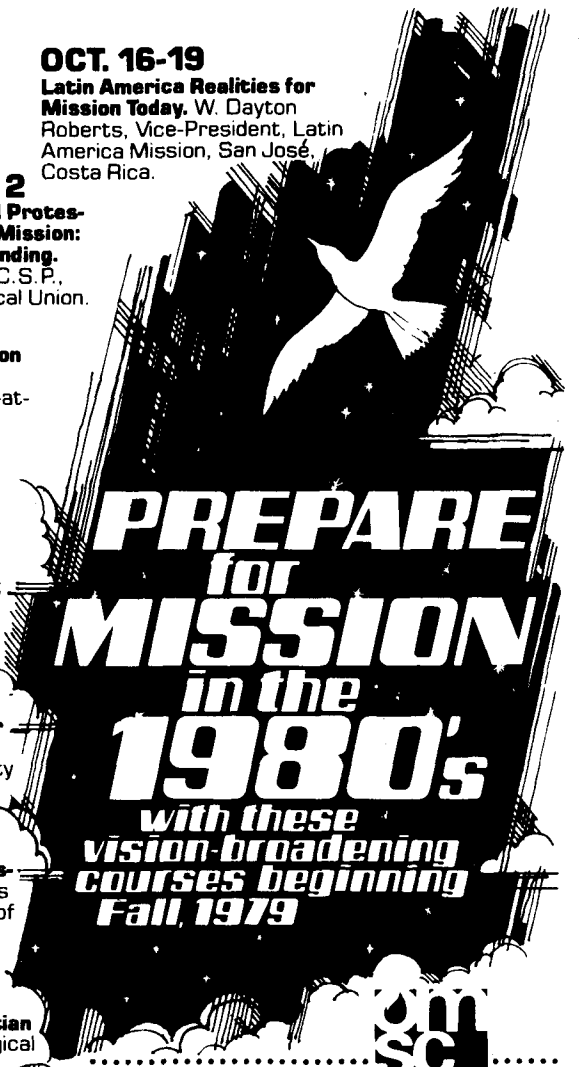

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poses is unsatisfying—didactic chapters on elementary feminist theology, a showy chapter on physics and theology.

And yet . . . there is something significant here about the mysteries of God's love and call, the depths and struggles of spirit-in-flesh, the remaking of the church, the splendid power of womankind. A few lines from the poem "Call" convey this sense of the whole work:

It has been said that while women sleep
the earth shall sleep. But listen!
We are waking up and rising,
and soon our sister will know her strength.
The earth-moving day is here.
We women wake to move in fire.
The earth shall be remade.

FRANCINE CARDMAN

WEASEL WORDS: *The Art of Saying What You Don't Mean, by Mario Pei, Harper & Row, $9.95, 208pp,;* WEASEL WORDS, *by Philip Howard, Oxford University Press, $10, 175pp.*

These books are as far apart in worth as they are distinct in approach. Philip Howard gives us short essays on forty-four terms; the late Mario Pei glances at hundreds, perhaps thousands, of words under headings like "The Shrill Voice of Women's Lib" and "Education's Forked Tongue." Howard cites the *Oxford English Dictionary*; Pei endorses Jack O'Brien, Ann Landers and Xaviera Hollander as "creative mentalities." Howard usually analyzes; Pei frequently lists.

A few of Howard's entries are Britishisms (we don't yet call a rubbish dump a "civic amenity site"), but his book is for anyone who cares about responsible usage. He is secure enough to know that jargon can sometimes be useful, and his self-indulgence extends only to a few unusual words ("borborygm") and to literary allusions, mostly to Shakespeare.

Generally, his good humor and common sense prevail:

Environment is "one of the woolliest vogue words of our time."

Moment in time "fills this moment in time with effortless, bland noise, and so gives the speaker a brief pause during which he can select his next platitude."

"Fine words butter no parsnips . . . violence and confusion are not removed by calling them *confrontation*."

"A century that has seen great nations led down the road to ruin by lying propaganda, like sheep to the shambles, cannot afford to be complacent about the power of dishonest language."

Howard is sharp, even surprising, on *feedback* when he distinguishes its true, precise meaning from the one of "bogus science." His comments on *quantum* are similarly exact; *quark* is "a delightful piece of jargon." He is, however, wrong on the literary *persona*, and he lifts an oversimple definition of irony from the *OED* without attribution.

But, Howard commits his infrequent faults following standards; Pei's are made in pursuit of a wide audience. Readers should return to Howard for the same reasons they do to Orwell, but unfortunately few will benefit from Pei's last work. In these books, the journalist far outdistances the academician.

ROBERT L. KING

REVIEWERS

FATHER RICHARD P. McBRIEN *is professor of theology at Boston College and director of its Institute for the Study of Religious Education and Service.*

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ROBERT L. KING *teaches English at the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, Massachusetts.*

Correspondence

(Continued from page 450)

Mass at their funerals. The explanation will be that before God breathed into Adam the *breath* of life (aiming through the lungs, of course, to start his neocortex going) he too hurriedly formed him out of dust of the ground: he put the brain stem in his cranium instead of down in the spinal cord where it belongs.

PAUL RAMSEY
Professor of Relgion,
Princeton University

Spontaneous confusion

Lexington, Kentucky

To the Editors: While I agree with Walter G. Jeffko in "Redefining Death" [July 6] that careful distinctions are needed, I do not agree that he has been successful in providing them. What is original in the article is the attempt at a formal definition of death and the effort to translate that formal definition into general physiological terms. However, both fail.

The formal definition—"Death here is defined as *the total and permanent cessation of the spontaneous activity of an organism as a whole.*"—fails on two counts. 1) The article does not tell us what "an organism as a whole" is, only what it is not. And to mix the requirement of total cessation with the designation "organism as a whole" only creates confusion. 2) More importantly, the heavy emphasis on "cessation of spontaneous activity" is troublesome since it is directed to respiratory and circulatory function. It does not help to declare that "spontaneous activity is essential to an organism." To make my point briefly, virtually no one would, by definition, declare a person dead who has cerebral activity but has respirator assisted respiration and circulation. It takes little imagination to go the next step. Most of us, I believe, would be quite reluctant to declare a person dead should brain activity as well as respiration and circulation be assisted mechanically. (The former is not yet technically possible, but may follow in the path of currently developed brain pacemakers.) Would Jeffko have a person declared dead, by definition, who is fully functioning but is technically assisted in all essential physiological functions? My point here was made well long ago by Hans Jonas. The question in this case is not: has the person died? but: how should the person (patient) be dealt with? And such a question is not settled by

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redefining death, but as a moral question over the value and quality of life.

The second major problem of the article follows from the first. It is interesting that while the author rightly places high status and value on being a human being he actually bases crucial moral decisions on physiological standards of primary (cerebral) and secondary (cardiopulmonary) functions, arguing that he has achieved a synthesis. He says, "It enables us to indicate what kind of human life is *significant* and worth living." Not at all! At least it is not the case without the additional premise, established on moral grounds, that decerebrate individuals ought not to continue to live since on Jeffko's terms they are alive. The point is that a mere stipulative definition of what is primary and secondary does not provide the moral grounds for what is significant about life.

The author actually backs into the above error by giving himself an easy walk over the controversial philosophical-neurophysiological matter of "man's rationality and animality," making use of the widely used but ambiguous terms "seat" or "locus" in offering neurophysiological explanations. He says, "The cerebrum, or higher brain, would seem to be the sufficient physiological locus of man's rationality." If he means "sufficient condition" or even "necessary and sufficient condition" then few philosophers and few neurophysiologists would concur since there is little or no evidence for the claim. If he means a "necessary condition," which can be readily admitted, then the claim is a weak one, and aids little in the practical decisions he wants to make since necessary conditions always leave open the possibility of a reality more comprehensive and of a different character than the conditions themselves.

In general, care must also be exercised not to force definitions to do more than their humble tasks, especially with such crucial issues as death. But I do not think defining death was ever simple, even with the so-called traditional way. A reminder from Aristotle, as applied in this context, may still be useful. To give intrinsic elusiveness its due is not being elusive but careful, especially in making decisions about human life and death.

DALLAS M. HIGH
Professor of Philosophy
University of Kentucky

Decerebrate state

Cleveland, Ohio

To the Editors: While I enjoyed Professor Jeffko's article in the July 6th issue of *Commonweal*, I was a little disappointed in his knowledge of basic neurophysiology and his lack of understanding of the medical significance of the article dealing with a definition of irreversible coma as published by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Harvard Medical School which appeared in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1968. . . . The most glaring of these errors is his repetitive use of the precise neurophysiological term, "decerebrate." If he were to examine any standard textbook on physiology, he would find that the term, by definition, allows for the preservation of distal brain stem function and usually is produced either experimentally or clinically when a lesion has occurred between the red nucleus and the vestibular nucleus in the brain stem. Equally disturbing is that the decerebrate state which neurologically is recognized in man and experimentally produced in animals carries its own unique set of reflexes and postures! Interestingly, under certain circumstances, the decerebrate state in man is reversible with the potential expectancy of eventual normal cerebral function!

Finally, I would advise Professor Jeffko to reread the original article on irreversible coma as published. There is considerable philosophical and theological "meat" in the discussion of that report and I believe that Professor Jeffko is placing far too much emphasis on clinical electroencephalographic monitoring than was the intent of the original article.

ROBERT J. WHITE, M.D., PH.D.
Professor and Co-Chairman
of Neurosurgery,
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Arpilleras

CHILEAN women whose husbands disappeared in the 1973 military takeover have been making patchwork tapestries (arpilleras) as a protest against the Pinochet regime and for self-support. To raise money for their families and for cooperative work in the shanty towns of Chile, Oxfam America is selling these tapestries at $25 each. Order from: OXFAM AMERICA, 302 Columbus Ave., Boston, Mass. 02116.

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American Catholic Theology

. . . One of the gains in the more recent approach to understanding God's action in history has certainly been the increased evaluation of the reality and importance of created things and persons. Supported by the rediscovery of the biblical emphasis on the "created," both in the distinctiveness of biblical insight into the transcendent "otherness" of God and his creation and in the genuine created humanness of Jesus, contemporary theologians have been able to challenge the long-standing heritage of Greek thought's under-estimation of created reality.

Like any other theological shift, this stress on the importance of the sensible world, above all on the autonomy and freedom and (if one uses the term carefully) ultimacy of humans, can be pushed to excess—in this case to eliminating the need for God as the sustainer and savior of history. But there is no need to go to such lengths in working out a more "creation-respecting" approach to a theology of divine providence.

If one does pursue such a view of history and of humans' role in it, there definitely is more uncertainty and relativity in human life. If history is really being given to men and women to shape by their decisions, this clearly makes the future a more risky venture. But it also draws attention to Christianity as a faith grounded in decision, to the resurrection of Jesus as "realized eschatology," to Christianity's heritage of hope and to its missionary responsibility to share such hope. All of these are reflected in post-World War II movements of theological confrontation with the realities of human history—such as recent theologies of hope, of politics, of liberation. . . .

—Bernard J. Cooke, "Whither American Catholic Theology," *Commonweal*, August 18, 1978

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